

Hafa Adai!

Lottery Commission yet to meet over IPI request for 5-year extension. **PAGE 2**
\$500 bonus for retirees, \$500 voucher for CUC residential accounts. **PAGE 3**

\$1

Saipan Tribune

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2 COVID-related deaths, 41 new cases in the NMI

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In a stark reminder that the COVID-19 pandemic is still far from over, the CNMI recorded two COVID-19-related deaths this weekend and 42 new posi-

tive cases, which came on the heels of two successive three-digit positive cases in the community.

In a news release yesterday, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, and the Com-

monwealth Healthcare Corp. confirmed the CNMI's fourth and fifth COVID-19-related

See DEATHS on Page 4

Temporary restrictions reimposed

Citing an increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations, the CNMI government is imposing temporary new restrictions effective today, Dec. 6,

2021, through Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021.

Under the new guidelines, See RESTRICTIONS on Page 4

IN BRIEF

- Effective Dec. 6 to Dec. 19, 2021
- All non-essential government offices closed
- Curfew: 12am to 4am.
- Face masks required in all public indoor spaces
- Indoor events must limit attendance to 50% of

allowed occupancy, but 100% occupancy is allowed for vaccine verified or negative test verified

AT A GLANCE

As of 6:41pm, Dec. 5, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population **88.5%**
Fully Vaccinated: **88.5%**

Days since last community transmission **2**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	34,766
Fully Vaccinated:	31,725
Moderna	
Initiated:	4,977
Fully Vaccinated:	4,781
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,025

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	19,227	21*	19,248
Recovered	17,472	1,230	18,702
Active	259	21	280
Deaths	266	0	266

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	958	146	1,104
Traced via Travel Screening	267	0	267
Traced via Community Screening	691	146	837
Deaths	3	2	5

*12/05=1; 12/04=8; 12/03=12

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

CNMI bids farewell to PH honorary consul



TanHoldings Corp. CEO Jerry Tan and his wife, Lydia Tan, pay their respects and final farewell to former Philippine honorary consul for the CNMI Glicerio "Eli" Del Mundo Arago at the Mount Carmel Cathedral last Saturday.

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Mt. Carmel Cathedral was packed last Saturday, with hundreds of people attending the public viewing and funeral Mass for former Philippine honorary consul for the CNMI Glicerio "Eli" Del Mundo

See FAREWELL on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

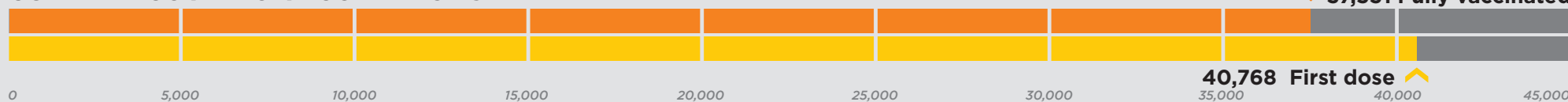
LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

19 DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



INSIDE



BUSINESS

A rush of vaccine-seeking customers and staff shortages are squeezing drug-stores around the U.S.

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ASIA

South Korea again broke its daily records for coronavirus infections and deaths.

PAGE 13



LIFE & STYLE

CNN fired anchor Chris Cuomo less than a week after information emerged about how he helped his brother.

» PAGE X



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Local

Lottery Commission yet to meet over IPI request for 5-year extension



Tao Xing, Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's senior vice president of Marketing and Public Affairs, answers questions from members of the Commonwealth Casino Commission during a board meeting last week pertaining to IPI's resubmission last July of its request to the Commonwealth Lottery Commission for a five-year extension on the deadline to finish its Imperial Pacific Resort project in Garapan.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

- » • **IPI says they are waiting for Commonwealth Lottery Commission's inquiry**
- » • **Commonwealth Casino Commission finds IPI's request lacks proof of financial suitability**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Lottery Commission has yet to meet to talk about Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's request last July to be given five more years to finish its Imperial Pacific Resort project in Garapan.

Tao Xing, IPI senior vice president of Marketing and Public Affairs, told the Commonwealth Casino Commission board members during a meeting last week that once CLC starts its inquiry, that's when IPI will provide evidence on how they are going to have the money necessary to complete this project, whether it's going to be a loan facility, guarantee, or credit.

"We need to understand what exactly they are looking for," Xing said.

CCC executive director Andrew Yeom, however, told Xing that CCC board chairman Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero is basically giving him (Xing) hints that CLC wants IPI to do something and not the other way around.

Yeom said CLC is waiting for IPI to provide enough information for them to decide what action to take. "You keep asking they should give you the schedule. It should be the other way," he said.

The executive director said IPI should come up with the financial funding plan on where they are going to get the money necessary to complete the IPR project. "They're waiting for such information. At this point, they're perturbed. They don't know what to do with you because obviously the information that you provided is insufficient," Yeom told Xing.

Xing said that once they receive CLC's inquiry, they will definitely respond.

Yeom said he does not blame Xing because the latter does not plan IPI's financial funding status. "And you keep referring to Hong Kong (IPI's mother company) which is true, but please tell them come up with the plan. That's first and foremost," Yeom said.

Xing said they had a plan that they already submitted

to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and that if CLC has any question or further inquiry, they will respond.

CCC vice chair Rafael Demapan said that, based on what he heard during discussions with Xing, it appears to him that both parties—CLC and IPI—are waiting for each other to initiate "something." Demapan suggested that Xing follow-up with CLC and request for a hearing.

"So when there is a date, hopefully by that time, you will have those information. That is very important for them to make a sound decision. But someone has to initiate a meeting," he said.

Xing agreed.

IPI is required by the exclusive casino license agreement to complete IPR's construction by February 2021.

DeLeon Guerrero said IPI has failed to make that happen, so technically it is in default of the agreement and there should be liquidated damages imposed on IPI. He said IPI's request for the five-year extension did not provide an attachment to CLC, to Torres, and to the CCC on its financial capability to carry out such a plan.

"And it's like, are you joking with us? How can you ask us to extend you five years when you have absolutely demonstrated no money at all, not financially suitable," DeLeon Guerrero said.

He said IPI should prepare a position statement on how it will finish the project if it has the money. He said it is IPI's obligation since it is the one in default, not the government.

DeLeon Guerrero said CLC does not want to hear IPI say it has the money, but wants to see concrete proof that IPI not only has the money but has the money allocated for the purpose of completing IPR.

The chairman said if they follow Public Law 18-56, IPI is not financially suitable and that's the whole issue why the company is facing a lot of these sanctions.

Xing said they will talk to their parent company in Hong Kong to see how they can better provide a picture of their finances to complete the project.

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Afternoon Session

3:00pm - 4:30pm

Guam, Port Moresby
Meeting ID: 897 5384 8712
Passcode: 249192

Link:
<http://tiny.cc/FEHBafternoonession>



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\$500 bonus for retirees, \$500 voucher for CUC residential accounts

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_deltorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres announced Friday that the administration will be giving each retiree a \$500 bonus and each Commonwealth Utili-

ties Corp. residential account holder a \$500 voucher—all for a total of \$9.8 million in federal funds.

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* follow-up question yesterday, Torres said \$1.3 million is allocated for retirees

and \$8.5 million for CUC's residential account holders.

Speaking at a radio news briefing Friday, Torres said the administration, working with the Department of Finance, will be giving every retiree a bonus of \$500 starting Dec. 15.

On top of that, Torres said they will also be giving \$500 as a voucher to every CUC residential account, which should be credited to their account over the past weekend or early this week.

Earlier this year, the Torres administration distributed local stimulus funds to the entire Commonwealth.

As to the question if the \$9.8 million comes from the American Rescue Plan Act funding, Torres only stated that they made sure that the release of the money does not violate any federal regulations.

"[This is] great news, after all the things that we've gone through. And I want to thank you for everything you

have done, your sacrifices. I want to personally thank you and your family," the governor said.

Torres said the \$500 bonus for the retirees, as well as the \$500 for every residential utility meter owner, will go a long way this holiday season.

"So I want to congratulate everyone and let's have a good holiday," he said.

For most retirees, Torres said, they would give the bonus through direct deposit, but for others who, for whatever reason, are not able to get the money through direct deposit, then Finance will

cut a check for them readily by Dec. 15.

Torres said those with CUC residential accounts don't have to take any action as they will automatically be given the \$500 voucher by having it credited to their account.

Last August, Finance started distributing over 20,000 CNMI or local stimulus cards using ARPA money. Finance earlier estimated to release \$25 million in all for 28,000 local stimulus cards.

Eligible individuals received \$500 per stimulus card and \$500 for each dependent.

'All efforts are on active mode'

By **JOSHUA SANTOS**
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With the increasing number of community cases of COVID-19 in the CNMI, all efforts "are on active mode," according to Governor's COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren F. Villagomez last Friday.

Villagomez said those efforts include working with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. to activate its Medical Care and Treatment Site; providing round-the-clock support to CHCC's Alternate Care Site; making sure that all quarantine sites are being actively monitored; and ensuring that all measures and protocols at these sites continue to be enforced.

The MCATS is the tent east of the CHCC hospital's emergency room on CHCC's upper level, and Villagomez said the site is "readily standing by."

In his latest updates on the COVID-19 efforts on Tinian and Rota, Villagomez said the Fleming Hotel has been identified as an isolation site on Tinian. On Rota, Villagomez said that governor's authorized representative Patrick Guerrero is right now coordinating the negotiations for a quarantine site on the island.

Villagomez said that transportation of supplies has been

a challenge to his and other leaders' focus on immediate action, with Star Marianas Air Inc.'s recent suspension of interisland flights. However, Villagomez said his team has been communicating with the U.S. Department of Defense and the CNMI Department of Public Safety's Boating Safety Division to ensure that supplies get to Tinian and Rota. "[We thank] them for tirelessly transporting our needs, from supplies to anything we need to push out to Rota and Tinian as soon as possible," said Villagomez.

When asked for updates on Saipan isolation sites, Villagomez said that Saipan Ocean View Hotel was activated as an isolation site last Thursday, Dec. 2, as the task force continues to cycle persons under investigation in and out of the CNMI's isolation sites.

Saipan Tribune earlier reported that the CNMI's active isolation sites include Kanoa Resort, the former Mariana Resort and Spa, and Pacific Islands Club Saipan.



Torres

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JGO Committee subpoenas Torres

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee has subpoenaed Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, commanding him to testify this Friday before the JGO, which is investigating his expenditures of public funds and travels.

As press time yesterday, *Saipan Tribune* was still awaiting comments from Torres.

Torres recently spoke out about some of the matters that came up during the

JGO investigation, saying he wants to end the JGO's "political show" by addressing the JGO's allegations regarding power and water billings associated with his private house in As Teo that is classified as the governor's official residence. The JGO is controlled by the Democrats. Torres is a Republican.

"I look forward to sharing more of my responses to these political and abusive allegations to the people directly in the coming weeks," said the governor in a recent interview with KKMP radio's Gary Sword. The video of the interview was forwarded

to the media and posted in the governor's Facebook account.

JGO Committee chair Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) said yesterday that House sergeant-at-arms Pedro Towai served the subpoena on Torres at the governor's residence in As Teo last Saturday at 10:30am.

Babauta said they appreciate that Torres has made several comments to the media with respect to the JGO investigation that he has been waiting for this moment to clear his name.

She said they are looking forward to the governor's testimony this Friday at 10:30am at the House chamber on Capital Hill.

DEATHS

From Page 1

deaths, who were both unvaccinated CNMI residents. The two patients tested positive for COVID-19 in November, were identified at CHCC, and were isolated.

Torres affirmed the first death on Friday, while CHCC chief executive officer Esther L. Muña confirmed the second death on Sunday.

Torres said "it is never easy to announce the loss of a community member" and asked the community to pray for the families and loved ones of the two individuals. Torres added that these deaths are a reminder that combatting COVID-19 is a community effort and encouraged the CNMI to get vaccinated and work together to keep the number of hospitalizations down.

Currently, there are 1,104 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the CNMI with more to be announced soon.

"This is another reminder for all of us to encourage our unvaccinated to get vaccinated for all of us to continue protecting each other during

this pandemic. Let's work together to keep our hospitalizations down. We will continue to keep our community safe," he said.

Muña also sent her thoughts to the victims' families and said now is the time to "reflect on the effect of this unforgiving disease." Muña also encouraged getting vaccinated and, if due for one, receiving a booster shot.

"We strongly encourage our unvaccinated residents to get vaccinated and if you are due for one, get your booster. Do this for protection from severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Also, please continue to practice the 3 W's: wear a mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance. Consistently practicing these measures help you and others from getting infected with the virus," she said.

CHCC chief medical officer Dr. John M. Tudela offered his condolences to the families and wished them "comfort, courage, and love in their time of sorrow."

He said the thousands of vulnerable, unvaccinated or undervaccinated individuals in the CNMI are still of great concern. "Knowing that

there are still thousands of vulnerable people in the CNMI who are unvaccinated or undervaccinated is disheartening. I cannot fathom the grief that families will face and I can only comfort them in sharing that we will ensure that their loved ones do not suffer should their condition prove futile. I urge everyone to take our messaging seriously and start taking personal responsibility," he said. "...I am afraid it is only the beginning as this virus continues to spread in our community."

New cases

The 42 individuals who were confirmed positive for COVID-19 were identified through surveillance testing conducted over three days from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2.

As of Dec. 3, the 42 cases bring the CNMI's active cases to 531 and the CNMI's total to 1,104. In its news release on Saturday, CHCC said all 42 have been isolated and are being actively monitored.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

RESTRICTIONS

From Page 1

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres will close all non-essential government offices. All non-essential government employees of the Commonwealth's departments and agencies are advised to stay home for the next 14 days.

Curfew hours are reimposed from 12am to 4am.

Face masks are required in all public indoor spaces, with some exceptions.

All indoor events must limit attendance to 50% of allowed occupancy, unless vaccination verification or negative test verification is done by the event organizer or establishment owner, in which case 100% occupancy is allowable.

Acceptable proof of vaccination includes an original vaccination card, a photocopy or photograph of a vaccination card, or an immunization record or documentation provided by CHCC or a healthcare provider.

Most of these measures were first imposed in the CNMI during the initial stage of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

In a statement last night, it said that Torres, the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. announced that the CNMI COVID-19 Emergency

Directives have been amended to implement the new guidelines on in-person interactions, public gatherings, and vaccine verification to protect the health and safety of the people of the CNMI.

Government

With all non-essential government offices closed and to ensure the continuity of public services, all department and activity heads have been advised to facilitate teleworking and timekeeping within their offices, divisions, and agencies during this government stay-at-home order.

Certain essential government offices will be open to the public on a limited basis. This includes the Division of Revenue and Taxation and the CNMI Treasury. Essential services involved in law enforcement, public safety, and public health will continue to fully operate. Announcements will be made regarding other public services.

Mask-wearing indoors

Face masks are required in all public indoor spaces. These spaces include but are not limited to: common areas of apartment buildings and offices, gyms, shops, cultural facilities, restaurants, bars, and night clubs.

Face masks are not required while seated at a food service establishment or actively eating or drinking.

Signage is required to be placed at all entrances indicating that face masks are required inside your facility.

Curfew

Exceptions to curfew hours remain:

- First responders while in performance of their official duties and displaying a COVID-19 Task Force-issued badge

- Any person lawfully employed during the curfew hours or is in direct route of going to or returning from their place of employment

- Any person going to or returning from admission to the CHCC hospital or completion of treatment such as hemodialysis.

Social gatherings

A facility's occupancy is set by the Department of Public Works' Building Code.

The requirement for verification of a COVID-19 vaccination completion is applicable to any guests 12 years and older. A proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours will be the option for the unvaccinated. COVID-19 tests are free when done at a Community Based Testing site.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

"The committee hopes that he will make the time to answer our questions under oath," said the chair, who signed the subpoena Friday.

The subpoena informed Torres that he may be accompanied by counsel of his choosing and remain in attendance until excused by the committee conducting the proceeding.

Babauta said that failure to comply with the subpoena may subject the governor to contempt and a civil enforcement action.

The first item listed in the subpoena for Torres to testify is the premium class travel he performed on behalf of the CNMI government.

Listed in the second item are the expenditures, per diem, stipend, and reimbursement justifications in the course of travel he performed between 2015 to the present, including, but not limited to, reimbursement for meals, hosting and gifts claimed by or on behalf of Torres and first lady Diann Tudela Torres.

Listed under the third item are property/inventory policies, procedures and practices of the Office

FAREWELL

From Page 1

Arago, who passed away on Nov. 24 at 69 in Guam.

There was not a single dry eye in sight during the public viewing and Mass for Arago, who took on the role of go-between between the Filipino community in the CNMI and the Philippine government when he became the honorary consul in 2015.

Among those who came out to join Arago's family in mourning were Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang, various CNMI officials, TanHoldings Corp. CEO Jerry Tan, and hundreds of Filipino nationals who have sought help or worked closely with Arago.

Torres, who spoke at the viewing, described Arago as a "great friend and a true partner" in building a stronger and closely-knit Commonwealth with help of the Filipino community.

"He and I personally collaborated on improving the lives of our *kabayans* because they have contributed to building a better community for our children and grandchildren to thrive. We worked well together, and I will always treasure our friendship. His untiring service and support to our community are a testament to the type of leader he was, as well as to the care and compassion he held," Torres said.

In his tribute, Tan said that Arago will always be admired and remembered for his genuine kindness and generosity, his love for his family, and loyalty to the company.

"Eli was a key executive and a pioneer employee of TanHoldings, and worked with numerous divisions and subsidiaries throughout Asia, Micronesia, and the U.S. His sound judgment and business acumen helped the company grow. Eli's leadership was central to our success and his expertise will be greatly missed," Tan said.

"Eli lived to help and be of service to others and is synonymous with volunteerism for the betterment of his community. His individual acts of guidance and generosity are too

of the Governor, including, but not limited to, equipment and good purchased or claimed by or behalf of Ralph DLG Torres and Diann Torres.

Fourth item listed are the use of Department of Public Safety personnel for personal security detail and the use of other government personnel and resources, including federal grants for the benefit of Ralph DLG Torres and Diann Torres

Fifth item listed are contract and contractual relationships entered into for the benefit of the Office of the Attorney General, Ralph DLG Torres and Diann Torres, including, but not limited to, contracts for personnel, consulting, and legal representation.

Sixth item listed are payment and use of utilities for the benefit of Ralph DLG Torres and Diann Torres.

Last item listed are federal investigation involving NMI government expenditures and resources.

The JGO had already served a subpoena on DPS Commissioner Robert Alepuyo Deleon Guerrero to testify before the Committee tomorrow, Tuesday, at 9:30am.

numerous to list, as are the many professional and civic awards he earned. Eli has been a valued and well-loved member of our team, our community and our personal lives, and we miss our friend already," he added.

Willie Tan, vice chair for the Luen Thai, was quoted in the event's souvenir program as saying he would forever treasure the time he spent with Arago.

"He had the sunniest disposition and enduring bright smile; a good natured and kind human being. We became very good friends and whenever we saw each other, he never failed to say he missed me and I did too. Only this time, I'll be missing him more," he said.

The day before, in a memorial held for Arago at the Kensington Hotel Saipan, the CNMI House of Representatives presented the Arago family with a commemorative resolution to honor and commend Arago for his countless contributions to the CNMI.

"The Legislature is proud to acknowledge the late Glicerio "Eli" Del Mundo Arago for his relentless commitment and unwavering dedication for the betterment of our Commonwealth," stated part of the resolution, which was introduced by Rep. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan).

Arago, 69, was born on Dec. 21, 1951 in Bulacan, Mabini, Batangas, Philippines. He graduated cum laude at the University of the East in Manila in 1972 with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, majoring in Accounting. In 1986, Arago came to Saipan to join TanHoldings Corp. From 2008 until his untimely passing, Arago served as senior vice president and chief finance officer for TanHoldings.

Meanwhile, from 2015 up until his untimely passing, Arago served as the honorary consul of the Philippines for the CNMI.

Throughout his life, Arago garnered several citations and awards/commendations, and the one he was most proud of was the Bagong Bayani Award he got in 2000 as one of only 10 awardees among 7.5 million Filipino workers abroad.

Villagomez says she safeguarded integrity of NMI's budget process

Pelosi asks about CNMI's unspent, expiring \$21.7M COVID relief funds

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi has asked about the \$21.7 million out of \$36.3 million in Coronavirus Relief Funds available for the CNMI and expiring on Dec. 3, 2021, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP).

When asked about this, Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres said yesterday the Department of Finance will have a response.

Sablan wrote Torres last Wednesday to tell him about Pelosi bringing to his (Sablan) attention the expiring COVID-19 relief funds. The delegate said that Pelosi asked him (Sablan) for the governor's expenditure plan for these funds.

"It would be a tremendous loss to the Commonwealth if you were unable to spend all the relief aid Congress has provided you," Sablan told Torres.

He said future funding will be more difficult to obtain if the CNMI government has a track record of not fully utilizing the money allocated to money.

The delegate asked Torres to provide him with his plan of expenditure for the remaining \$21.7 million of Coronavirus Relief Funds, so that he can give that information to Pelosi and ensure that this federal aid continues.

The delegate said the CNMI was originally awarded \$36.3

million from the CARES Act, U.S. Public 116-136, which was enacted in March 2020.

He said the funds are to be used for unbudgeted expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency during 2020.

Yet as of Sept. 30, 2021, Torres had only spent \$14.6 million or 40.2% of his original allotment, according to the data collected by the federal Pandemic Oversight agency, Sablan said.

By comparison, the Guam governor has spent all that territory's Coronavirus Relief Fund allotment, Sablan added.

He said the American Samoa governor had used 90% as of Sept. 30, 2021.

"The Commonwealth is lagging far behind," Sablan said.

He also noted that, in reviewing the list of businesses and government agencies that shared in the \$14.6 million that Torres did spend, he does not find the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., which had significant, unbudgeted expenses during the initial year of the pandemic.

The delegate said the Public School System too would have had significant, unexpected expenses as students and teachers transitioned to working from home during that period of time.

"Yet none of the \$36.3 million at your disposal seems to have gone to education," he said.

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Virginia C. Villagomez, who was terminated Thursday as special assistant for the Office of Management and Budget, said over the weekend that she exited the position knowing she has safeguarded the integrity of the budget process of the CNMI.

In a statement, Villagomez said she understands that she serves at the pleasure of the governor in her position as OMB special assistant.

She extended her appreciation to her staff at the OMB,

Capital Improvement Program, and the Hazard Mitigation and Public Assistance programs.

Citing only "the interest of the Commonwealth," Gov. Ralph DLG Torres terminated Villagomez last week effective immediately.

Villagomez gave credit to the late governor Eloy S. Inos who, according to her, undoubtedly gave her the opportunity to be a public servant under his leadership during his tenure as the director of the Department of Finance in 1989.

"I am proud to have been

mentored by him until his passing," she said.

When asked during a radio press briefing Friday to elaborate on the reason for Villagomez's termination, Torres said anyone appointed as a special assistant for the OMB shall serve at the pleasure of the governor and may be removed by the governor with or without cause.

With that, Torres said, he just decided to go ahead and release Villagomez from her post and have this administrative move forward.

He said he will be appoint-



Villagomez

ing someone as interim SA for OMB.

There were speculations on social media that her termination may have been politically motivated. Villagomez is the

partner of former Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services commissioner Claudio Norita, who supports the candidacies of Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang as governor and lieutenant governor, respectively, in the upcoming November 2022 general elections.

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NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.net>

PUBLIC NOTICE

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION (NMHC) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT – DISASTER RECOVERY (CDBG-DR) FEDERAL CROSS-CUTTING REQUIREMENT PRESENTATION ON SECTION 3, DAVIS BACON AND RELATED ACTS (DBRA), ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS, FAIR LABOR, FAIR HOUSING & NON-DISCRIMINATION, AND WOMEN AND MINORITY OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES.

12/02/2021

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is conducting a Federal Cross-Cutting presentation for all interested contractors planning to conduct business with the NMHC. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) encourages all HUD funded programs to comply with these requirements.

Section 3 is a provision of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968. The purpose of Section 3 is to ensure employment and other economic opportunities generated by certain HUD financial assistance shall, to the greatest extent feasible, and consistent with existing Federal, State and local laws and regulations, be directed to low-and very low-income persons, particularly those who are recipients of government assistance for housing, and to business concerns which provide economic opportunities to low-and very low-income person.

Davis Bacon and Related Acts: require the payment of prevailing wages to laborers and mechanics employed on the site of the work of certain federal or federally assisted contracts for construction, alteration, or repair.

An Environmental Review is the process of reviewing a project and its potential environmental impacts to determine whether it meets federal, state, and local environmental standards. The environmental review process is required for all HUD-assisted projects to ensure that the proposed project does not negatively impact the surrounding environment and that the property site itself will not have an adverse environmental or health effect on end users

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is a federal law which establishes minimum wage, overtime pay eligibility, recordkeeping, and child labor standards affecting full-time and part-time workers in the private sector and in federal, state, and local governments.

The Fair Housing Act (FHA) is a federal statute that prohibits discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, as well as in residential real-estate related transactions such as advertising, mortgage lending, homeowner's insurance and zoning.

As a recipient of HUD financial assistance, NMHC CDBG-DR is required as the non-Federal entity to take necessary steps to ensure that all Subrecipients, Contractors, subcontractors, and/or developers funded in whole or in part with CDBG-DR financial assistance ensure that, when possible, contracts and other economic opportunities are directed to small and minority firms, women-owned business enterprises (WBEs), and labor surplus area firms.

The Federal Cross-Cutting Requirement presentation is scheduled on December 15, 2021, 10:00 a.m. via Zoom Teleconferencing. You may access the Zoom Teleconference link at www.nmhc.gov.net Public Notice/Announcement tab or www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

If you may have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer at (670)234-6866/9447 or via email at officemanager@nmhc.gov.net.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

Tinian Field Office
Tel: (670)433-9213
Fax: (670)433-3690

"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

Rota Field Office
Tel: (670)532-9410
Fax: (670)532-9441

CPA says NMI govt will be fully subsidizing Star Marianas' fees

In order to resume interisland travel as soon as possible, the Commonwealth Ports Authority has gotten assurance from the CNMI central government that it is committed to fully covering all of Star Marianas Airline Inc.'s fees that has made it financially tough for it to continue providing air service for the CNMI.

In a letter addressing Star Marianas' concerns, CPA chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds assured the airline that, with the goal of immediately resuming interisland air connectivity, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has given his commitment to fully subsidizing all fees and charges that CPA will assess SMA for the remainder of fiscal year 2022, provided that SMA agrees to reduce the cost of travel to the islands of Tinian and Rota.

"It is the board's goal and priority to amicably resolve CPA and SMA's dispute over the new rates methodology through a series of consultations with you in the immediate future. It is my hope that you consider this proposition and deem it a good faith effort to finding a pathway moving forward that is mutually beneficial. As this is of urgent concern and one that would greatly benefit the people of

Tinian and Rota, please contact me as soon as possible. We look forward to working together to resume interisland air service," she said in the letter to SMA.

King-Hinds also informed Star Marianas that the administration is also looking at ways to permanently lower the cost of interisland travel, like availing of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Small Community and Rural Air Service program.

"The governor is committed to finding a way to permanently lower the cost of interisland travel. The governor agrees with CPA that the long-term solution to this issue is for the CNMI to avail itself of U.S. DOT's Small Community and Rural Air Service programs," King-Hinds stated.

However, in response to King-Hinds, Star Marianas president Shaun Christian said that fully subsidizing Star Marianas' fees is not the appropriate solution to the issue at hand.

"SMA would like to point out that the core dispute is not entirely about money. Therefore, the proposal to subsidize SMA's operation with either CNMI taxpayer funds or federal funds is not an appropriate solution. SMA

has never sought to avoid the payment of its fair share of properly determined and allocated costs as an aeronautical user of the CNMI airports," he said.

What Star Marianas wants, Christian said, is to resolve any disputes with CPA informally but in an appropriate and structured format that involves a neutral third party.

"In order to make meaningful progress there must be a commitment by both sides to engage in mediation within a definite time frame in the near future. [Star Marianas] is not interested in saddling the CNMI taxpayers with the burden of subsidizing SMA's operations. SMA is capable of managing its own business affairs. If CPA is willing to engage in meaningful, structured discussions based on the above parameters, then SMA is also willing to engage in such discussions and work toward restoring interisland air service," he said.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Star Marianas claims that CPA's new method in assessing rental rates has made the company's cost to provide air services not financially feasible and forced them to stop flying. (**Kimberly B. Esmores**)



NORTHERN MARIANAS COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 506689, SAIPAN, MP 96950
PHONE: (670) 234-3878
EMAIL: INFO@ENDVIOLENCENMI.ORG
HOURS: 9AM TO 5PM, M-F, CLOSED ON FEDERAL HOLIDAYS

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR PROGRAM COORDINATOR (2 POSITIONS)

Job Summary: The Program Coordinator will work with the Executive Director of NMCADSV, Associate Director, other NMCADSV staff, and its Board to achieve its mission, goals and objectives. The Program Coordinator will participate in the daily operations of NMCADSV, as well as provide support for NMCADSV's programmatic activities. The Program Coordinator will work with the Associate Director to plan and execute activities in relation to NMCADSV's mission and goals, with particular attention to specific activities outlined in corresponding grant applications.

Minimum Qualifications: High School Diploma or Equivalent; an agreement with NMCADSV's mission statement and philosophy regarding the elimination of domestic and sexual violence; experience with community organizing and/or outreach; experience planning and executing events; demonstrated proficiency in written and oral communication; proficiency in MS Applications or Google Applications; ability to manage multiple tasks and deadlines; ability to work some nights and weekends; and must be able to travel within the CNMI and US Mainland.

Highly-Desired Qualifications: Knowledge of dynamics of sexual violence and/or domestic violence; 1 year or more of documented experience/work with non-profit organizations or volunteerism; and own transportation, with documented insurance, registration, and a valid driver's license.

Classification & Salary Range: Full Time, Non-Exempt. \$14.00 to \$18.25 per hour (based on experience and qualifications). Full benefits including paid leave and health insurance.

To Apply: A Resume and Cover Letter should be submitted on or before **5:00pm on Tuesday, December 7, 2021**. Provide a list (not copies) of any certifications or awards. Late and incomplete submissions will not be considered. Resumes, cover letters, and other documents may be emailed to info@endviolencenmi.org OR delivered to the NMCADSV Office at the Marina Heights I Building in Puerto Rico, Saipan during hours of operation OR mailed to NMCADSV postmarked on or before the deadline. Applicants who are asked to interview will be asked to bring a copy of their Diploma(s) or equivalent, Police Clearance (dated within 30 days), valid Passport, and a list of references.

NMCADSV is an equal opportunity employer. Individuals from under-served communities are encouraged to apply. Copies of the full Position Description can be requested by email at info@endviolencenmi.org OR downloaded from <https://linktr.ee/endviolencenmi> OR picked up from the NMCADSV Office.

This project is supported by Grant No. 2019-MU-AX-0013 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, US Department of Justice and Grant No. 2101MPSDVC awarded by the Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/proposal/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the US Department of Justice or the US Department of Health and Human Services.



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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM (SART) MANAGER

Job Summary: The SART Manager will work with the Executive Director of NMCADSV, NMCADSV staff, and its Board to achieve the mission, goals, and objectives of the organization. The SART Manager will be primarily responsible for CNMI-wide systems advocacy to cultivate the prevention of sexual violence and victim-centered responses for victims of sexual assault. This includes taking a leadership role in facilitating cross-discipline collaboration, providing ongoing training and technical assistance to SART members and allied organizations, and obtaining feedback from all partners to develop policies and protocols that support victim-centered and empowerment-based responses to victims of sexual assault.

Minimum Qualifications: High School Diploma or Equivalent; an understanding of and agreement with NMCADSV's mission statement and philosophy regarding the elimination of domestic and sexual violence; strong communication skills, verbal and written, with diverse groups of people and professionals; strong organizational, collaborative, and project management skills; experience with training or providing education to various audiences; experience with facilitating meetings and bringing stakeholders together for collaborative efforts; ability to facilitate engagement and interest among allied partners with positive and professional communication; ability to organize and work with partners from a variety of organizations such as law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, court personnel, healthcare professionals, and other community organizations; experience with assessments and analysis; ability to implement complex projects with extremely tight deadlines; must be able to travel within the CNMI and US Mainland; and must have access to reliable transportation.

Classification & Salary Range: Full Time, Exempt. \$16 to \$22 per hour (based on experience and qualifications). Full benefits including paid leave and health insurance.

To Apply: A Resume and Cover Letter should be submitted on or before **5:00pm on Tuesday, December 7, 2021**. Provide a list (not copies) of any certifications or awards. Late and incomplete submissions will not be considered. Resumes, cover letters, and other documents may be emailed to info@endviolencenmi.org OR delivered to the NMCADSV Office at the Marina Heights I Building in Puerto Rico, Saipan during hours of operation OR mailed to NMCADSV postmarked on or before the deadline. Applicants who are asked to interview will be asked to bring a copy of their Diploma(s) or equivalent, Police Clearance (dated within 30 days), valid Passport, and a list of references.

NMCADSV is an equal opportunity employer. Individuals from under-served communities are encouraged to apply. Copies of the full Position Description can be requested by email at info@endviolencenmi.org OR downloaded from <https://linktr.ee/endviolencenmi> OR picked up from the NMCADSV Office.

This project is supported by Grant No. 2019-WR-AX-0051 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, US Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/proposal/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

Public warned of high surf and high risk of rip currents

The public is being warned of a high risk of rip currents and high surf.

A high rip current risk of rip currents advisory is now in effect until 6am Thursday. For the high surf advisory, it is in effect until 6am Wednesday.

Also, seas of 9 to 12 feet

are expected along Marianas coastal waters until 6am Tuesday. A small craft advisory remains in effect until 6am Tuesday on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

Conditions will be hazardous to small craft.

Based on the information

received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, hazardous surf of 9 to 13 feet and dangerous rip currents will be present in north, east and west facing reefs of the Marianas.

This will create dangerous swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away

from shore into deeper water.

A northwest swell will slowly decrease the next couple of days as an east-northeast swell quickly builds. Surf will fall below hazardous levels of 9 feet along west facing reefs early today, but will continue along north facing reefs the next couple of days. Surf along east facing reefs will reach hazardous levels of 12 feet and continue through Monday night before decreasing.

Inexperienced swimmers should remain out of the water due to dangerous surf conditions.

The government is reminding the public to avoid venturing out toward north and east facing reefs. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and

call or wave for help.

The combination of a northwest and building northeast swell will maintain hazardous seas conditions to small craft. The northwest swell was expected to begin to subside last night with northeast swell beginning to subside Monday night.

Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, to avoid navigating in hazardous conditions. (PR)

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Jury selection today is cancelled

This is to inform all prospective jurors on panel "21DS" that the jury selection scheduled for today, Dec. 6, 2021 at 8:30am and 12:30pm is hereby cancelled until further notice. For further information, contact Clerk of Court Patrick Diaz at Superior Court at telephone no. 670-236-9783 or 670-783-8522. (PR)

SINMI monthly meeting on Thursday

The Soroptimist International Chapter of the Northern Mariana Islands will hold its monthly luncheon meeting on Thursday, Dec. 9, at 12pm at the 360 Restaurant. Join us to help continue our work for the "Best for Women" in the CNMI!

The Club is accepting new members. Come and meet us and see what we are all

about! (PR)

Announcing the 'Holiday Art Bazaar'

The public is invited to attend the "Holiday Art Bazaar" on Dec. 18, 2021, a Saturday, from 9am to 3pm at the Kagman Community Center. This is an event for the residents of Saipan and the Precinct 5 community to promote local art, artists and small businesses and to provide a venue for people to buy locally made gifts in time for the holidays. Stay tuned for the announcement of participating vendors this Friday!

This event is sponsored by the offices of your Precinct 5 representatives and has been approved by the COVID-19 Task Force. The COVID safety guidelines of the 3W's will be enforced: Wash your hands, Wear a Mask, Watch your Distance. (PR)



CHCC OUTREACH

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s COVID-19 operations outreach team will be knocking door-to-door to assist residents with any COVID-19 operation, whether it's testing, vaccination, or the registration process.

CHCC



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Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Wading into perilous waters: Conservatives on the Supreme Court look set to trash *Roe v. Wade*'s viability line—but what would they replace it with?

Not even the most strident defender of abortion rights would call the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision a model of elegant jurisprudence. But as six conservatives on the Supreme Court itch to strike it down—on the grounds that women's bodily autonomy during pregnancy, at least until a fetus is thought to be viable outside the womb, is not rooted in any language of the Constitution—an inconvenient truth shouts back: They have no better dividing line to offer than viability.

Which is to say, it is highly likely that if the anti-*Roe* votes carry the day, upholding Mississippi's 15-week abortion ban, they will wind up giving state legislatures license to outlaw abortion from whatever date they see fit, right up to the moment of conception. If viability, which generally comes at around 24 weeks, isn't the best legal demarcation between permissible and impermissible termination of pregnancy, what is? Silence fills a court where no one is ever at a loss for words.

The viability standard is based on the sensible notion that, as a matter of basic liberty, women must have control over their reproductive systems—but that the state's interest rises, and a woman's wanes, as a fetus becomes capable of living outside the womb.

Roe's foes sometimes suggest that one alternative is adapting a standard from 1991's *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* ruling, shredding the 24-week rule and simply asserting in its place that states may not place an "undue burden" on the right to abortion. This could let the 15-week ban in question stand because most terminations occur before that time in a pregnancy. But conservatives should be loath to toss a ruling they revile for being unprincipled and replace it with a cobbled-together, convenient but unsustainable hash.

The late Colin Powell had a rule of warfare he called the Pottery Barn rule: You break it, you buy it. The same goes for Supreme Court precedents. If it shatters an imperfect, half-century-old standard, it owns whatever mess it replaces it with.

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Iron Dome in Guam

The Guam media reported that Iron Dome operated by the U.S. Army has been deployed to our island for the past several weeks. Iron Dome is a military air defense system, funded in part by the United States and developed by Israel. Iron Dome is being tested in Guam to assess how its vertical mobile unit interceptor system would work against an actual cruise missile attack.

Iron Dome is intended to defend against long and medium range attacks from planes, drones, missiles, and rockets as one response to the significant military threats that could be used to destroy American forces on the ground in Guam. Iron Dome has the wherewithal to identify and track missiles, employ a fire control system, and operate several launchers for approximately 20 missiles for each Army battery.

U.S. Army personnel and organizations from Japan, Guam, Alabama, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Texas, and elsewhere have been working on qualification, training, and testing aspects of this project. This Guam-based operation represents one instance of the U.S. Army seeking to reconstitute its overall ability to provide air defense measures from a short-range air defense vantage point.

The Army remains involved in ongoing deliberations regarding Iron Dome because it is viewed as an interim approach to providing the military with weapons that could intercept incoming missiles.

Pressure from Congress to both purchase and deploy Iron Domes has resulted in the U.S. Army establishing two organizations called batteries, consisting of up to roughly 200 soldiers in each battery, to specifically work on Iron Dome products.

What the US Army is trying to accomplish

The U.S. Army is trying to find ways to remain relevant and contribute to America's greater military focus throughout the western Pacific and Asiatic region. The Army competes for resources, attention and media coverage with the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps.

The Army is attempting to find ways to prove that it can protect American military interests abroad and Iron Dome is one expression of this thinking.

Guam serves as a vital testbed location because of how many military assets are already in place and concentrated on our ancient Chamorro Pacific Islander home. The Army cannot afford not to try new things in Guam because of the over-

RICK'S COLUMN

By RICK PEREZ

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rick Perez used to serve in the U.S. military and has work experiences in public policy research and public affairs. He is passionate about national security and geopolitics and runs a newsletter called Guam Affairs at guamaffairs.substack.com. For questions or comments, contact Perez at rickp7839@gmail.com.



all focus and thrust of increased militarization in and around our island chain region.

The Army has an official program of record under which the Iron Dome effort resides; it is called the Indirect Fires Protection Capability program, which in turn is part of the Missiles and Space's Cruise Missile Defense Systems program.

Congressional and Pentagon macarena: A short- and long-term dance routine that may be out of beat

In American imperial politics, especially politics that relates to money and jobs, both Congress and the Pentagon can have the oddest of relationships. The Iron Dome is one such entity where Congress is telling the Army what it will purchase.

What's at stake is upwards of \$5 billion or more for war profiteering companies such as Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and other firms, including foreign ally defense industry partners from Israel. What's at stake is finding the most effective and useful way to produce and launch interceptors and to build the right kinds of interceptors that can destroy incoming missiles.

What's at stake is now the Army is creating new official programs of record revolving around directed energy resources and the laws of physics to take out land-based weapons of war, further enabling the Army to remain relevant in winning future wars.

The Chamorro people remain 'naked' and exposed in this massive superpower race to train, prepare, pay, and conduct war on top of

See IRON on next page

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR**Quitugua respond to Paduna**

Last week on Tuesday, Nov. 30, former speaker Pedro “Paduna” R. Deleon Guerrero accused NMI Democratic Party chairwoman Nola Hix and me of being “bad leaders,” saying we chased him out of a meeting with Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang last month.

Here are the facts behind that story: First, it was true that the meeting on Oct. 24, 2021, was between the Democrats and Arnold and Dave. Second, it was a closed-door member-only meeting between the two independent candidates and members of the Democratic Party Central Executive Committee, including members of the House and Senate Democrats. A total of 23 people were at this meeting, including Arnold and Dave. Third, as a sign of respect for each other, no recording and picture taking was allowed. Otherwise, if the meeting was recorded it would reveal the whole truth regarding the situation Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero was so grumpy about. Fourth, Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero was *not* chased out as he characterized it; he was asked “to please leave.” Fifth, Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero is *not* a member of the Central Executive Committee. Sixth, Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero cannot proxy for his brother, Herman Guerrero, because there is no proxy provision in the bylaw since the acting chairmanship of former representative Pedro C. Arriola more than 25 years ago.

Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero has a vile history of causing instability within the Democratic Party, including his direct participation in the demise of the party in the election of 1981. Again, in the election of 1987, the Democratic Party got enough members elected that could secure the speakership. However, Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero who was one of the Democrats that won conspired with Republican to secure himself the speakership, denying the Party control of the House. Had it not for his hunger for a position of importance, Juan S. Reyes (Liling) would have been the speaker.

Considering the above and his disrespectful outburst at the Oct. 24 meeting just once again added to my lingering concern that the man has deep-seated conspiratorial behavior issue. How could it be possible that Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero described the event dramatically different from the 23 people in the room who listened and witnessed the drama?

Readers, decide for yourself as I recount what happened. The meeting started off very well. Arnold and Dave were presenting their thoughts on the advantages of an alliance between the two groups. As the conversation progressed and in the middle of a question-and-answer session, Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero walked in, to the complete surprise and disbelief of all members, because he was not supposed to be there. Amongst those who witnessed the event were four lawyers and a former associate judge.

When Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero sat down, I walked over and quietly whispered to him, respectfully asking that he leave the place because it was a closed-door member-only meeting. He asked me if I was chasing him out, and I told him that since he is not a member of the CEC he cannot remain in the room and asked him to be respectful of the occasion. At this point he was arguing that he was there as a proxy for his brother, Herman Guerrero “HR.” I told him the

Party’s bylaw has no proxy provision.

Contrary to his false claim, no one disrespected him; it was the other way around. He is the one who was being insensitive and disrespectful at the gathering. Only those individuals who were elected to the Party at the general membership meeting back in January 2019 were supposed to be there. Disappointingly, though, as the meeting was taking place, Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero opened the door and, without a word, walked in the middle of the discussion and sat down. He did not even have the decency to ask if he could be allowed in to listen.

My quiet request for him to leave the room was followed by chairwoman Hix openly asking him to leave the place because not only was he not a member but no one had also invited him to be there. Finding no other justifiable reason for his presence and intrusive behavior, he stood up and, as he was walking out the door, he pointed at the chair and in a loud voice said, “You are a bad leader” twice.

His disdainful attitude of entitlement because he is a former speaker overpowered his good judgment to display a behavior in keeping with good taste and propriety. His argument that he was there as a proxy for his brother was so out of touch with today’s Party bylaw. Proxy may have been a practice he used during his time in 1981 when he was part of a group that broke up the Democratic Party. No such provision exists in our bylaw today. This shows how long he has been a member of the Democratic Party and his claimed of being a Central Executive Committee as well.

My initial reaction was to let Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero have his moment. Still, the fact remains that Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero came to our meeting, premeditatedly determined to behave the way he did. Such behavior was reminiscent of his direct involvement in breaking up the Democratic Party and destroy its political dominance. If his intention were to demonstrate his support and loyalty to Arnold and Dave, he could have done it honorably deserving his stature as a former speaker. Besides, Arnold and Dave, who witnessed the tantrum, would have been more impressed and prouder. Was I surprised that Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero behaved the way he did? Absolutely not. Similar behavioral outbursts happened in the past under different circumstances. So I was under no illusion that his behavior will ever change.

The constant drive for personal validation and acknowledgement reminds me of a narcissistic personality, which is a mental condition in which a person has an inflated sense of his own importance, a deep need for excessive attention and admiration, troubled relationship and a lack of empathy for others. We have seen this type of people in the likes of Donald Trump and Gov. Torres.

Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero will continue to spin the event for his own selfish political benefit, and he is entitled to seek his own glorification. He is also at liberty to support whichever candidate he believes in, and we respect that. However, the Democratic Party of today, through its elected Central Executive Committee, the governing body of the Party, would stand firm in protecting its organizational integrity and would not allow itself to be used and abused as the case in 1981, for someone’s own political aggrandizement.

Since Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero’s direct participation in breaking up the Democratic Party in 1981, it took those of us who continue to believe in its principles and values a cumulative 35 years to rebuild and regain the confidence of the voting public to where the Party is today. It appears, by his unprovoked outburst on Oct. 24, that Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero is on a crusade to once again destroy the Democratic Party.

My experience with Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero through the years was that on any occasion where he was part of a group or individual conversation, he would always interrupt the discussions with negativity rather than appreciate one’s contribution xto the conversation. And in the end, it was always about himself and what he has done.

The Democratic Party of today, however, is not the Democratic Party Mr. Pedro “Paduna” Deleon Guerrero helped destroy in 1981. The Democratic Party of today is not and will not engage in any types of subversive political acts or innuendos to harm anyone. Instead, the Democratic Party of today will engage in conversations with our citizens based on facts in presenting its vision to motivate our citizens to believe in themselves and encourage the full use of their fundamental powers to make transformational change in the way we exercise self-government under our continued political relationship with the United States.

The Democratic Party of today will maximize the strength and benefit of working closely with our delegate to the U.S. Congress. We will continue to nurture our strong relationships and be grateful for the invaluable financial support provided by the U.S. Congress through our own representative to help improve the quality of lives of our citizens.

The Democratic Party of today will approach politics by focusing on the goodness and strength of its vision to help create a promising future for our children. The children are the rock on which our future will be rebuilt; they are our greatest asset as a self-governing community. They will be the leaders of our island communities, the creators of our Commonwealth who will care and protect our citizens. There can be no keener revelation of a community’s soul than the way in which it treats its children. We believe in the wisdom of Frederick Douglass that “it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

The Democratic Party of today will endeavor and commit to the ideal of advancing children’s frontiers for Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures—a roadmap of a Party that believe in the empowerment of its children who will be the heirs of their own destiny. It will not be about a campaign of despaired men trying to resurrect a politics of a bygone era, but an investment for the future of our children so that they can live life to its fullest.

Yes, it will be an exciting venture and the greatest enterprise the Commonwealth will ever invest in and undertake.

As to the statement that I am a “bad leader,” well, let me respond to it this way by borrowing a phrase from a judge who often was asked by appearing counsels to make a ruling from the bench and the response is usually, “I will take it under advisement.”

Daniel O. Quitugua

Kannat Tabla, Saipan

IRON

From Page 8

and in our collective backyard

Not one island in the Marianas chain has a nuclear bomb shelter system in place for villagers to go to should our insular homes be attacked.

If any of our islands were attacked, our people would perish instantly from the sheer magnitude and force of massive missile attacks.

Both the Guam and CNMI congressmen have not introduced authorization bills to pay for a study on how much it would cost Congress to build a nuclear bomb shelter system in Guam,

Saipan, Tinian, or elsewhere.

The Guam and CNMI congressmen do not sit on any of the Armed Services subcommittees. This alone is a travesty and should be reexamined now.

Mission set omissions: How about our Chamorro people and their collective safety and wellbeing?






While the Army seeks to integrate its Iron Dome assets into the much broader community of integrated air and missile defense command and control operational activities that it operates, our Chamorro villagers have a host of needs that are simply not expressed, understood, or appreciated.

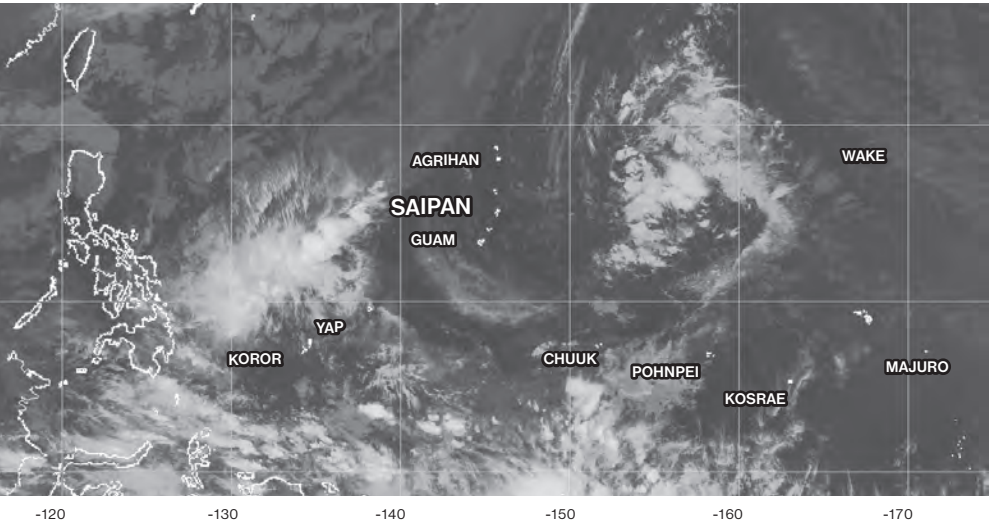
We should wonder just how much of the Pentagon’s efforts will truly protect our island civilization despite existing defensive system in place to provide some layers of protection.

With China already practiced in hypersonic weapons testing and the release and associated successes or partial successes of hypersonic glide vehicle impacts, our Chamorro civilization should be asking if all these activities currently being conducted by the Pentagon in Guam are somewhat futile.

We can’t ever forget that hypersonic weapons travel several times the speed of sound and cannot be detected by existing radar configurations in a way that will enable military leaders to understand, assess and respond to a potential attack against Guam in real time.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. southeast winds 10 to 15 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers. southeast winds 10 to 15 mph.		Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Slight chance of thunderstorms.		Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Slight chance of thunderstorms.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
85°	76°	87°	78°	86°	76°	87°	78°	87°	78°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:18 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2021
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A surface trough sits just to the west after having passed over the Marianas overnight, bringing showers to the islands for a few hours. Another surface trough is seen to the east, just approaching 150E. Combined with an upper-level low near 17N155E, the two are producing a number of thunderstorms north of 14N. Farther east, north of Wake Island, a large area of strong east to northeast trade winds is seen that has persisted for a few days and is producing large swell that is aimed for the Marianas. Latest altimetry shows 15-20 foot seas in that region, with 10-12 foot seas nearer the Marianas. The Ipan Buoy shows 7 foot seas.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:29 AM	5:45 PM
Tuesday	6:30 AM	5:46 PM
Wednesday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Thursday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Friday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	8:19 AM	7:46 PM	-
Tuesday	9:23 AM	8:52 PM	-
Wednesday	10:21 AM	9:55 PM	-
Thursday	11:12 AM	10:55 PM	-
Friday	11:57 AM	11:50 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	75° / 61°	
Beijing	Sunny	45° / 21°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	73° / 59°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	81° / 69°	
London	Sunny	48° / 39°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	73° / 53°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 77°	
Melbourne	Rain	66° / 55°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	78° / 72°	
New York	Mostly Sunny	52° / 44°	
Osaka	Sunny	52° / 39°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	46° / 41°	
Busan	Mostly Sunny	43° / 30°	
Rome	Mostly Sunny	55° / 39°	
Salem	Partly Cloudy	71° / 54°	
San Francisco	Sunny	60° / 44°	
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	32° / 21°	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	55° / 39°	
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	55° / 44°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
2:47 AM	Low Tide	-0.92	
9:59 AM	High Tide	1.91	
3:20 PM	Low Tide	1.16	
8:02 PM	High Tide	1.90	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
				UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6	7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4, 5	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6	TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM		3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
				2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

NEWS DESK

For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235.3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website: www.saipantribune.com.

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United becomes first to fly passengers using sustainable fuel

CHICAGO—United Airlines flew last week an unprecedented flight that will serve as a turning point in the industry's effort to combat climate change: for the first time in aviation history, a commercial carrier flew an aircraft full of passengers using 100% sustainable aviation fuel.

Also last week, United announced the second round of

corporate participants in the airline's Eco-Skies Alliance program to collectively contribute toward the purchase of SAF.

SAF is an alternative fuel made with non-petroleum feedstocks. SAF has the potential to deliver the performance of petroleum-based jet fuel but with a fraction of its carbon footprint, and ac-

cording to the U.S. Department of Energy, the country's vast feedstock resources are enough to meet the projected fuel demand of the entire U.S. aviation industry.

United already has agreements to purchase nearly twice as much SAF as the known agreements of all other global airlines combined.

"United continues to lead

from the front when it comes to climate change action," said United CEO Scott Kirby, who flew aboard yesterday's historic SAF flight. "Today's SAF flight is not only a significant milestone for efforts to decarbonize our industry, but when combined with the surge in commitments to produce and purchase alternative fuels, we're demonstrating

the scalable and impactful way companies can join together and play a role in addressing the biggest challenge of our lifetimes."

The demonstration flight—which departed Thursday with more than 100 passengers from Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and landed at Washington, D.C.'s Reagan National Airport—

used a new United 737 MAX 8 and 500 gallons of SAF in one engine and the same amount of conventional jet fuel in the other engine.

United's Eco-Skies Alliance program was launched in April 2021 and now has collectively contributed toward the purchase of more than 7 million gallons of SAF this year alone. **(PR)**

More NMC graduates join long list of NMC NCLEX passers



Villaluna



Tafoya-Sablan



Yu

Northern Marianas College nursing graduates Joann Villaluna, Kayla Tafoya-Sablan, and Sohee Yu have joined the long list of NMC graduates who have passed the National Council Licensure

Examination for Registered Nurses or NCLEX-RN.

The NCLEX-RN tests an individual's nursing knowledge, skills and abilities essential to the safe and effective practice of nursing at the

entry level. The exam is used by nursing boards in all U.S. states and territories to award nursing licenses.

"It's great to see more and more NMC nursing graduates pass the challeng-

ing NCLEX-RN," NMC president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero said. "I congratulate Joann, Kayla, and Sohee on this accomplishment."

NMC Nursing Department chair Rosa Aldan also congratulated the three on their achievements.

"Joann, Kayla, and Sohee have bright futures in the nursing field and we expect to see great things from them as their educational and professional journeys continue," Aldan said.

According to Villaluna, the main reason why she wanted to become a nurse was because of her grandfather. "I remember when my grandfather was admitted to the hospital and I saw closely how the nurses took care of him," Villaluna said. "It became my main source of inspiration to become a nurse. I feel fortunate now that I would finally be able to advocate and provide support not only to my family but also to the health and well-being of those in need."

Villaluna also said that NMC provided all its students with a safe and support-

ive learning environment. "I am grateful for my nursing instructors: Rosa T. Aldan, Johnny Aldan, Breanna Lee, and Ermelinda Oneto. I'd like to thank them for sharing their knowledge and for their commitment to guiding all the next generations of nurses," Villaluna said.

For Tafoya-Sablan, she said the support from her family, close friends, her nursing cohort, and the entire NMC Nursing Department staff contributed to her success with the NCLEX. "All the support I received was not in vain because I accomplished what I set out to do, and I am forever grateful

for those who helped me get to this point," Tafoya-Sablan said.

According to Yu, the Kaplan test prep given to her by NMC played a huge role in her passing the NCLEX.

"The summary session I had with my nursing instructor Mrs. Breanna was very helpful in helping me study for the NCLEX," Yu said. "I also appreciate how NMC instructors and the quality of its education continue to develop as well."

For more information about NMC's nursing program, email Aldan at rosa.aldan@marianas.edu or call 237-6744. **(PR)**

Avis Rent A Car is latest ProaPerks partner

Avis Rent A Car is the latest company to sign on as a Northern Marianas College ProaPerks partner, joining many other businesses and organizations that provides exclusive discounts and benefits for NMC students, employees, and alumni.


All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can now receive a 50% discount on all medium sedan and SUV rentals at Avis Rent A Car.

Avis Rent A Car joins the growing list of ProaPerks partners, such as 153 Restaurant, 360 Restaurant, 4EVER CNMI, Alamo Car Rental, AllStar Sporting Goods, Aqua Connections, Inc., Athlete's Foot, Avis Rent A Car, BAB Korean Restaurant Cup Bab, Chagi Norf Kitchen, Boarderline, Bolis R US 2, Candle J, Caravan of Food, Casa Decor, Casa Urashima, Chelu Alynez Enterprise, Chungi Wa Korean Restaurant, Coral Garden Hotel, Cosmos Lounge, D' Chef's Kitchen, Docomo Pacific, Dollar Days, Enterprise Car Rental, Ete Cafe, Fishing Tackle and Sporting Goods, Fork and Spoon, Garapan Restaurant Cafe & Grill, Gold's Gym, Grandvrio Resort Saipan, Great Harvest, and Boyer Trading Company LLC dba Ginen Saipan, among many others.

NMC is in the introductory phase of rolling out the ProaPerks to alumni, students, and employees. For more information, visit marianas.edu/proaperks.

Companies and other interested organizations who would like to become part of

the ProaPerks program and take advantage of the buying power of thousands of individuals that include Northern Marianas College alumni, students, and employees, can find more information by emailing proaperks@marianas.edu. **(NMC)**



SAIPAN HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
Office of the Mayor
Municipality of Saipan

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING


In accordance with 1 CMC § 9901 *et seq.*, as amended, the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance (SHEFA) Board is hereby giving notice of its Special board meeting, to be held on December 6, 2021, at 9:00 a.m., Office of SHEFA conference room, 2nd Floor, CTC Building, Oleai, Beach Road, Saipan.

AGENDA

- I. Preliminary Matters**
 1. Call to Order
 2. Roll Call
 3. Adoption of agenda
- II. Public Comment (s)**
- III. Special Meeting Item(s): Extension of SHEFA application deadline**
- IV. Executive Session (if needed)**
- V. Miscellaneous/Announcements**
- VI. Next Meeting**
- VII. Adjournment**

/s/ Oscar M. Babauta,
Chairman, Board of SHEFA Directors

P.O. Box 10001, PMB 3648 Saipan, MP 96950-8901
Tel: (670) 233-5995/235-1020/21 • Telefax: 233-5996
E-mail: saipanshefa@gmail.com
Website: www.saipanshefa.net



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS RFP22-GOV-4220026

MONITORING SERVICES FOR THE POST CLOSURE OF THE PUERTO RICO DUMPSITE IN GARAPAN, SAIPAN

SUBMISSION DATE: 9:30 AM JANUARY 06, 2022

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are soliciting sealed proposals from qualified contractors to provide Labor, Material and Equipment for the MONITORING SERVICES of the Post Closure Maintenance of the Puerto Rico Dumpsite (Now called Governor Eloy S. Inos Peace Park) in Puerto Rico, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project will be funded by the 702 Covenant funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available in digital format only on **December 06, 2021** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours.

A mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference will be held at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, at **10:00 AM ChST December 21, 2021**. Proposers may request to participate via phone call or virtually five (5) days prior to the meeting scheduled. All attendees are required to use a face mask and exercise social distancing throughout the duration of the meeting.

Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted via email to Ms. Jessel Mesa at jm.mesa@dof.gov.mp no later than **4:30 PM ChST, December 27th, 2021**. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective Proposers.

Proposers located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Propose Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **9:30AM January 17th, 2022**.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ **Ralph DLG. Torres**
Governor, CNMI

/s/ **Francisco C. Aguon, Acting Director**
CNMI Procurement & Supply



COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
P.O. Box 502149, Saipan MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 | Fax: (670) 235-7147
www.developcnmi.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

December 6, 2021

The Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA), with the support of the CEDA Board of Directors, is committed to feasible strategies to continue to provide services to the public, while minimizing the risk of exposure and spread of the COVID-19 virus. We remain hopeful and committed to overcoming the coronavirus pandemic and its economic ramifications. Our objective is to continue to provide services and support safely, responsibly, and effectively for our CEDA clients and the public to ensure confidence in our efforts to protect the safety and health of our clients, employees, and the public.

The CEDA offices in Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are limiting in-person meetings. We are available to the public by video conference, telephone, and curbside assistance.

Our CEDA loan department, located in the 1st floor office in CEDA Building on Saipan, continues to provide curbside assistance, telephone, and virtual meetings. For your convenience, a payment drop box is located outside the door of our 1st floor office. CEDA clients may also consider setting up Automated Clearing House (ACH) payments or authorize CEDA to process credit card payments, via phone or email.

For more information on our services, please check our website at www.developcnmi.com or contact the following:

Saipan Office: 670-234-6245
Administration: extensions 304, 310, 311
Accounting: extensions 301, 302, 303

Loan Department: (located on the 1st floor of the CEDA Building, Oleai, Saipan)
Fred Cruz, phone ext. 305 email: f.cruz@developcnmi.com
Abby Atalig, phone ext. 309 email: a.atalig@developcnmi.com
Marie Coleman, phone ext. 307 email: m.coleman@developcnmi.com

Tinian Office: 670-433-9203
Thalia Hofschneider
Email: t.hofschneider@developcnmi.com

Rota Office: temporary contact Saipan 670-234-6245
Email: e.manglona@developcnmi.com

/s/ **MANUEL A. SABLAN**
Executive Director

Concurred by:
/s/ **AUBRY M. HOCOG**
Chairwoman, CEDA Board of Directors

Business

US drugstores being squeezed by vaccine demand, staff shortages

A rush of vaccine-seeking customers and staff shortages are squeezing drugstores around the U.S., leading to frazzled workers and temporary pharmacy closures.

Drugstores are normally busy this time of year with flu shots and other vaccines, but now pharmacists are doling out a growing number of COVID-19 shots and giving coronavirus tests.

The push for shots is expected to grow more intense as President Joe Biden urges vaccinated Americans to get booster shots to combat the emerging omicron variant. The White House said Thursday that more than two in three COVID-19 vaccinations are happening at local pharmacies.

And pharmacists worry another job might soon be added to their to-do list: If regulators approve antiviral pills from drugmakers Merck and Pfizer to treat COVID-19, pharmacists may be able to diagnose infections and then prescribe pills to customers.

"There's crazy increased demand on pharmacies right now," said Theresa Tolle, an independent pharmacist who has seen COVID-19 vaccine demand quadruple since the summer at her Sebastian, Florida, store.

Pharmacists say demand for COVID-19 vaccines started picking up over the summer as the delta variant spread rapidly. Booster shots and the expansion of vaccine eligibility to include children have since stoked it.

On top of that workload and routine prescriptions, many drugstores also have been asking pharmacists to counsel patients more generally on their health or about chronic conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure.

Pharmacies also have been handling more phone calls from customers with questions about vaccines or COVID-19 tests, noted Justin Wilson, who owns three independent pharmacies in Oklahoma.

"We're all working a lot harder than we did before, but we're doing everything we can to take care of people," Wilson said, adding that he has not had to temporarily close any of his pharmacies or limit hours so far.

Tolle said she was lucky to hire a pharmacy resident just before the delta surge arrived. The new employee



A sign is posted outside a CVS pharmacy on Thursday, Dec. 2, 2021 in Indianapolis.

was supposed to focus mostly on diabetes programs but has largely been relegated to vaccine duty.

Tolle said her Bay Street Pharmacy is now giving about 80 COVID-19 vaccines a day, up from 20 before the delta wave.

"God's timing worked out well for me," she said. "We would not have gotten through without having that additional person here."

Others haven't been as fortunate. A CVS Health store on the northeast side of Indianapolis shuttered its pharmacy in the middle of the afternoon Thursday due to staffing issues. A sign taped to the metal gate over the closed pharmacy counter also told customers that the pharmacy will soon start closing for a half hour each afternoon so the pharmacist can have a lunch break.

Such temporary closures have ebbed and flowed in pockets around the country throughout the pandemic, but they have grown more acute in recent months, said Anne Burns, a vice president with the American Pharmacists Association.

Pharmacies all need minimum staffing to operate safely, and they sometimes have to close temporarily if they fall below those levels.

Burns said many pharmacies already had relatively thin staffing levels heading into the pandemic, and a wave of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians left after the virus hit.

"There is a lot of stress and burnout for individuals who have been going at this since March of 2020," she said.

CVS Health spokesman T.J. Crawford said he couldn't comment on the

circumstances for one store. But he said his company continues "to manage through a workforce shortage that isn't unique to CVS Health."

Rival drugstore chain Walgreens also has adjusted pharmacy hours "in a limited number of stores," spokesman Fraser Engerman said.

Both companies are hiring. CVS Health says it has hired 23,000 employees from a push it started in September. About half of that total was pharmacy technicians, who can deliver vaccines.

As companies scramble to hire or keep staff, Burns and Tolle worry about adding even more responsibilities like diagnosing and treating COVID-19.

Tolle noted that it is not clear yet how pharmacists will be reimbursed for the time they take to diagnose and prescribe. That will have to be clarified, especially if cases surge again and drugstores need to add even more workers to help.

"We want to be able to help our communities," she said. "I don't know how pharmacies are going to manage it."

Sherri Brown, a city employee in Omaha, Nebraska, was searching for a vaccine booster dose, but two nearby pharmacies didn't have appointments available and a third didn't have the brand she wanted. She wound up getting a shot at a county-run clinic on Friday.

"I just wanted to protect myself," said Brown, who suffered through two weeks of coughing, headaches and fatigue when she caught the virus in January, before she was vaccinated. "I guess I'm encouraged to see that people are taking this more seriously." (AP)

Nation

Michigan parents found hiding in building; bail at \$500K each

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP)—A judge imposed a combined \$1 million bond Saturday for the parents of the Michigan teen charged with killing four students at Oxford High School, hours after police said they were caught hiding in a Detroit commercial building.



James Crumbley

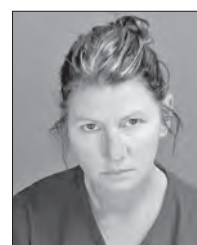
James and Jennifer Crumbley entered not guilty pleas to each of the four involuntary manslaughter counts against them during a hearing held on Zoom. Jennifer Crumbley sobbed and struggled to respond to the judge's questions at times and James Crumbley shook his head when a prosecutor said their son had full access to the gun used in the killings.

Judge Julie Nicholson as-

signed bond of \$500,000 apiece to each of the parents and required GPS monitoring if they pay to be released, agreeing with prosecutors that they posed a flight risk.

Defense attorneys for the Crumbleys still argued Saturday that they never intended to flee and had made

plans to meet their lawyers early that morning. Attorney Shannon Smith accused prosecutors of "cherry picking" facts to release publicly, including that accusation that their teenage son had unrestricted access to the handgun prosecutors say his father pur-



Jennifer Crumbley

chased for him days before the shooting.

"Our clients are just as devastated as everyone else," Smith said, adding that the gun "was locked." She didn't provide more detail during Saturday's hearing.

Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald's office filed involuntary manslaughter charges against the Crumbleys on Friday, accusing them of failing to intervene on the day of the tragedy despite being confronted with a drawing and chilling message—"blood everywhere"—that was found at the boy's desk. They could each face up to 15 years in prison, according to a spokeswoman for McDonald's office.

Omicron now detected in eight states

By CAROLYN THOMPSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York announced three more cases of the omicron variant of the coronavirus Saturday, bringing the number of state cases linked to the new variant to eight.

"The omicron variant is here, and as anticipated we are seeing the beginning of community spread," state Health Commissioner Mary Bassett said in a news release.

The number of states finding the variant is growing as well, with Massachusetts, Connecticut and Washing-

ton state announcing their first cases Saturday, a day after New Jersey, Georgia, Pennsylvania and Maryland reported their first confirmed cases. Missouri reported its first presumed case Friday.

The variant also has been detected in Nebraska, Minnesota, California, Hawaii, Colorado and Utah.

In New York, seven of the cases have been found in New York City, once a global epicenter of the pandemic, and the other in Suffolk County.

The arrival of omicron comes as hospitals statewide continue to strain under a

surge in coronavirus cases, most traced to the delta variant, along with staffing shortages.

The number of people testing positive statewide each day for the virus has doubled in the last 30 days.

Gov. Kathy Hochul in recent days has authorized the Health Department to limit nonessential, non-urgent procedures at hospitals close to running out of beds and deployed National Guard teams to relieve healthcare workers at facilities dealing with staffing issues and surging caseloads.

IF RUSSIA INVADES UKRAINE

'No shortage of sanction options'

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration has plenty of options to make good on its pledge to hit Russia financially if President Vladimir Putin invades Ukraine, from sanctions targeting Putin's associates to cutting Russia off from the financial system that sends money flowing around the world.



Biden

The United States and European allies have made no public mention of any plans to respond militarily themselves if Putin sends troops massed along the border into Ukraine, a former Soviet re-

public with close historical and cultural ties to Russia but now eager to ally with NATO and the West.

Instead, payback could be all about the money.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken this week promised financial pain—"high impact economic measures that we've refrained from taking in the past." President Joe Biden on Friday said the U.S. had developed the "most comprehensive and meaningful set of initiatives to make it very, very difficult for Mr. Putin."

The United States over the past decade already has put a range of sanctions in place against Russian entities and individuals, many of them over Russia's invasion and annexation of Crimea and its support for armed separatists in eastern Ukraine in 2014. U.S. sanctions also have sought to punish Russia for election interference, malicious cyber activities and human rights abuses.

Since 2014, the West also has helped Ukraine build up its military. So while Putin denies any intention of launching an offensive, his troops would face a Ukrainian army much more capable of putting up a fight.

Asia



Bottles of hand sanitizer are placed for public use to prevent from the coronavirus at a park in Goyang, South Korea, Saturday, Dec. 4, 2021. AP

SKorea sets daily records for COVID-19 cases and deaths

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea again broke its daily records for coronavirus infections and deaths and confirmed three more cases of the new omicron variant as officials scramble to tighten social distancing and border controls.

The 5,352 new cases reported by the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency on Saturday marked the third time this week the daily tally exceeded 5,000. The country's death toll was at 3,809 after a record 70 virus patients died in the past 24 hours, while the 752 patients in serious or critical conditions

were also an all-time high. As the delta-driven surge threatens to overwhelm hospital systems, there is also concern about the local spread of the omicron variant, which is seen as potentially more infectious than previous strains of the virus.

The country's omicron caseload is now at nine after KDCA confirmed three more cases. The new cases include the wife, mother-in-law and a friend of a man who caught omicron from a couple he drove home from the airport after they arrived from Nigeria on Nov. 24. The couple's teenage child and two other women who also traveled to

Nigeria have also been infected with omicron.

Officials say the number of omicron cases could rise as some of the patients had attended a church gathering involving hundreds of people on Nov. 28.

While the emergence of omicron has triggered global alarm and pushed governments around the world to tighten their borders, scientists say it remains unclear whether the new variant is more contagious, more likely to evade the protection provided by vaccines or more likely to cause serious illnesses than previous versions of the virus.

ASIA BRIEFS

Indian villagers protest as army kills 13, fearing rebels

GAUHATI, India (AP)—Angry villagers burned army vehicles in protest after more than a dozen people were killed by soldiers who mistakenly believed some of them were militants in India's remote northeast region along the border with Myanmar, officials said Sunday. Nagaland state's top elected official Neiphiu Rio ordered a probe into the killings, which occurred on Saturday, and he tweeted, "The unfortunate incident leading to the killing of civilians at Oting is highly condemnable." An army officer said the soldiers fired at a truck after receiving intelligence about a movement of insurgents in the area and killed six people. As irate villagers burned two army vehicles, the soldiers fired at them, killing seven more people, the officer said on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to talk to reporters. One soldier was also killed in the clash with protesters, he said.

Deaths rises to 13 in Indonesia volcano blast

LUMAJANG, Indonesia (AP)—The death toll following the eruption of the highest volcano on Indonesia's most densely populated island of Java has risen to 13, with seven people still missing, officials said Sunday as smoldering debris and thick mud hampered search efforts. Mount Semeru in Lumajang district in East Java province spewed thick

columns of ash more than 12,000 meters (40,000 feet) into the sky, and searing gas and lava flowed down its slopes after a sudden eruption Saturday triggered by heavy rains. Several villages were blanketed with falling ash. A thunderstorm and days of rain, which eroded and finally collapsed the lava dome atop the 3,676-meter (12,060-foot) Semeru, triggered the eruption, said Eko Budi Lelono, who heads the geological survey center. He said flows of searing gas and lava traveled up to 800 meters (2,624 feet) to a nearby river at least twice on Saturday. People were advised to stay 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) from the crater's mouth, the agency said.

Storm weakens after heavy rain, evacuation in southern India

HYDERABAD, India (AP)—A tropical storm weakened after dumping heavy rains overnight in parts of southern India off the Bay of Bengal as more than 50,000 people evacuated to government-run camps, officials said Saturday. No loss of life or major damage has been reported so far from the rain-hit areas of Andhra Pradesh state. Kanna Babu, a state commissioner for disaster management, said 54,000 people who evacuated on Friday from vulnerable areas were waiting in nearly 200 state-run relief camps for the weather to clear before returning to their homes. Authorities shut schools, canceled trains and anchored fishermen's boats in the affected areas until Sunday.

World

Britain tightens travel testing rules amid omicron concerns

LONDON (AP)—Britain's government tightened travel restrictions Saturday amid concerns about the spread of the omicron coronavirus variant, saying all travelers arriving in England will need to take a COVID-19 test before they board their flight.

Health Secretary Sajid Javid said the new rules will apply from 4 a.m. London time Tuesday.

"In light of the most recent data, we are taking further action to slow the incursion of the omicron variant," he

said in a tweet.

Javid also added Nigeria to the U.K.'s travel "red list," which means that arrivals from there will be banned except for U.K. and Irish residents, and those travellers must isolate in designated quarantine facilities. He said there was a "significant number" of omicron cases linked to travel with Nigeria, with 27 cases recorded in England.

Karen Dee, the chief executive of the Airport Operators Association, said the new measures will be a

"major deterrent" to travel, just as airports and the travel industry were hoping for a small uplift over the festive season.

"This is a devastating blow for aviation and tourism," she said.

Authorities recorded another 42,848 confirmed coronavirus cases in the U.K. as of Saturday, with 127 more deaths. With over 145,000 COVID-19 deaths in the pandemic, Britain has the second-highest virus death toll in Europe after Russia.

Italian dentist presents fake arm for vaccine

MILAN (AP)—A dentist in Italy faces possible criminal charges after trying to receive a coronavirus vaccine in a fake arm made of silicone.

A nurse in the northern city of Biella, Filippa Bua, said she could tell right away that something was off when a

man presented the phony limb for a shot on Thursday.

"When I uncovered the arm, I felt skin that was cold and gummy, and the color was too light," Bua told Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera.

She said she initially thought the 57-year-old man was an

amputee and had mistakenly offered the wrong arm. She lifted his shirt and saw a silicone arm.

"I understood immediately that the man was trying to avoid the vaccination by using a silicone prosthetic, into which he hoped that I would inject the drug, unaware, Bua said.

WORLD BRIEFS

Biden, Putin set video call Tuesday as Ukraine tensions grow

MOSCOW (AP)—Presidents Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin will speak in a video call Tuesday, the White House and Kremlin said, as tensions between the United States and Russia escalate over a Russian troop buildup on the Ukrainian border that's seen as a sign of a potential invasion. Biden will press U.S. concerns about Russian military activities on the border and "reaffirm the United States' support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Saturday, confirming the planned call after first word came from Moscow. Putin will come to the call with concerns of his own and intends to express Russia's opposition to any move to admit Ukraine into the NATO military alliance. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said "the presidents will decide themselves" how long their talk will last.

5 bodies found in house just outside Berlin

BERLIN (AP)—Five bodies with gunshot and stabbing wounds were found Saturday in a house just outside Berlin, German authorities said. The victims included three children. Officers found the bodies in the Senzig district of Koenigs Wusterhausen, southeast of Berlin, after witnesses reported seeing dead people in the building, prosecutors and police said in a statement. Investigators said they believe the victims—two 40-year-olds and children aged 10, 8 and 4, all of whom lived in the house—were killed. They found gunshot and stabbing wounds on the bodies.

At least 30 civilians reported killed in Mali truck attack

BAMAKO, Mali (AP)—Gunmen attacked a truck carrying civilians in central Mali, killing at least 31 people, a local official said Saturday. The mayor of Bandiagara, Housseini Saye, said the truck was carrying about 50 civilians when the identified gunmen attacked the vehicle Friday about 10 kilometers outside the town. "The

shooting caused the truck to catch fire, and 31 people died, most of them burned to death," said the mayor, who is also a member of Mali's transitional parliament. "There were several injured and two missing." The attack has not been claimed, but it bears the mark of local armed groups linked to al-Qaida. The bloodshed could exacerbate tensions between communities in central Mali that already have led to extended violence in the region. Attacks by armed groups linked to al-Qaida against the Malian army began in 2015. Insecurity has worsened with attacks on civilians and United Nations peacekeepers in Mali.

21 die when bus heading to wedding swept into river in Kenya

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—At least 21 people died after a bus carrying choir members to a wedding plunged into a river in Kenya on Saturday, police said. Mwingi East Sub-County Police Commander Joseph Yakan said the driver tried to steer the bus past a flooded bridge, but the strong current swept the vehicle into the river. Police said 17 people were rescued. The choir members of Mwingi Catholic Church had been traveling for their male colleague's wedding when the accident occurred in Kitui County. Officials said the incident is under investigation.

210 migrants found packed into truck in central Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexican immigration authorities say they discovered 210 migrants packed into a truck trailer in the central part of the country. The National Migration Institute said the truck failed to stop as directed at a checkpoint in Puebla state on Friday and it was pulled over after a pursuit near the city of Tecamachalco. When the doors of the trailer were opened, agents found women, men and children amid cushions and homemade fans, the institute said. The driver of the truck was detained. The discovery came two weeks after authorities found 600 migrants in two trailers in the eastern state of Veracruz.

Health & Wellness

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It's not realistic to think the holiday season will be stress-free.

Mental health and the holidays: *Holiday stress*

By JOEL STREED
MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK

Q Those who are vaccinated for COVID-19 may be planning family gatherings, gift exchanges and big meals this year. After last year, a lot of people are feeling more pressure to make this

holiday season even better for their loved ones. Do you have any tips for coping with the stress of it all?

A Whenever something is important to those we love, we direct our energy toward creating the perfect experience for them. But often there are elements out of our control—including finances, past and

present relationships, health and current events — that interfere with our vision of the perfect holiday season.

When we set high expectations, we can feel stressed and unhappy when we don't meet them. We may feel as if we have let down the people we love most.

"The key to coping this time of year is to set realistic expectations,"

says Lisa Hardesty, licensed clinical health psychologist, Mayo Clinic Health System. "Remember that it's the time you spend together and the memories that you make that are most important. That is what you will remember most."

■ Don't try to recreate 'perfect' holidays from years past. People change, and holidays can change

Information in this post was accurate at the time of its posting. Due to the fluid nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, scientific understanding, along with guidelines and recommendations, may have changed since the original publication date.

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Tips to help make getting a COVID-19 vaccine less scary for kids

By DEEDEE STIEPAN
MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK

Families may be able to gather more safely now that the Food and Drug Administration granted emergency use authorization for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in children 5–11. Mayo Clinic and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices strongly recommend that children 5–11 be vaccinated for COVID-19.

Dr. Robert M. Jacobson, a pediatrician and vaccine researcher with the Mayo Clinic Children's Center, offers a few tips on how to ease any fears or anxiety young children may have about getting vaccinated:

■ **Don't surprise children with vaccination.**

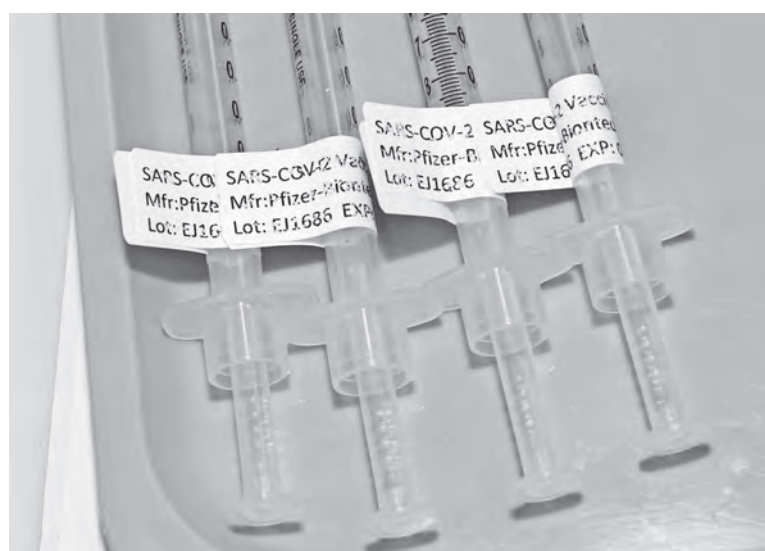
Children should not first hear about the vaccination when they show up at a provider's office or a

pharmacy. Usually, I recommend parents talk to their children in the days before that the vaccination comes up.

■ **Talk with children about the vaccine and answer their questions.**

Explain to children that the pain of the injection will come and go, but the benefits will be long-lasting. Teach them that the vaccine teaches the body to defend against the germs and the harm they do.

If you or your children have a question that you're not handling well, that you're not getting the answers that you need, or your child is not understanding, consult your child's health care provider. He or she should be a part of your decision-making of how you pursue preventive care for you and your family. This is an important issue. We are suffering a pandemic right now. Your children, and their livelihoods, are at risk. So get that health



Syringes with the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.

care provider involved if you get stumped.

■ **Be a good example.**

Be an example to your children by getting vaccinated, staying up

to date on your vaccinations and sharing your experience with them. These are all things that you can do to prepare your children for getting vaccinated for COVID-19 and other

vaccinations a child will be due for.

■ **Celebrate the vaccination.**

Demonstrating appreciation for your child getting vaccinated goes a long way to reward a 5- to 11-year-old. You need to remember that developmentally these children are looking to demonstrate some mastery, to be grown up. Talking to them about how this is a step of maturity, how this is grown up of them, this is mature—those are words that reward children 5–11 that they're doing the right thing.

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Life & Style

CNN fires Chris Cuomo for helping brother deal with scandal

NEW YORK (AP)—CNN fired anchor Chris Cuomo on Saturday less than a week after new information emerged about how he assisted his brother, former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, as the politician faced sexual harassment allegations earlier this year.

The network had suspended its prime-time host on Tuesday to investigate his conduct, after New York's attorney general released details showing he was more involved than previously known in helping to strategize and reach out to other journalists as his brother fought to keep his job.

CNN hired a law firm for that review, which it would not identify. The lawyers recommended Chris Cuomo's termination and CNN chief Jeff Zucker informed the anchor of the decision on Saturday.

"It goes without saying that these decisions are not easy,

and there are a lot of complex factors involved," Zucker said in an email to CNN staff on Saturday.

The network said that "while in the process of that review, additional information has come to light." CNN would not discuss that information, or characterize whether it had anything to do with his brother.

Cuomo issued a statement on Twitter calling the decision disappointing.

"This is not how I want my time at CNN to end but I have already told you why and how I helped my brother. So let me now say as disappointing as this is, I could not be more proud of the team at Cuomo Prime Time and the work we did," he said.

Even with the firing, CNN said it will continue to investigate Cuomo's conduct "as appropriate."

A year ago the two sons of the late New York Gov. Mario Cuomo were flying high: Andrew as a three-term governor praised initially in many circles for his handling of the pandemic, Chris as the top-rated personality on CNN. Now they're both out of work.

As women came forward accusing former Gov. Andrew Cuomo of sexual harassment, his brother, despite being a CNN anchor, pressed sources for information on the accusers and reported back to the governor's staff on what he was learning.

He was active in helping craft their response to the charges, according to emails and a transcript of his testimony to investigators working for state Attorney General Letitia James. Her office found Andrew Cuomo sexually harassed at least 11 women; the former governor

resigned in August to avoid a likely impeachment trial.

Chris Cuomo and CNN have been under fire for months about their anchor's conduct. When it first came to light in May

that the anchor had been talking to his brother's advisers, the network acknowledged that he had broken its rules but, as CNN said in a statement upon his suspension earlier this week, "we also appreciated the unique position he was in and understood his need to put family first and job second."

The transcripts released by James this week revealed considerably more detail about Cuomo's involvement—conduct CNN executives admitted was a surprise even to them.

While Cuomo has said he never tried to influence CNN's



Cuomo

own coverage of his brother, he told investigators for James about his calls to other journalists to find out what information they had about some of his accusers.

That seemed to conflict with an on-air statement Cuomo gave on CNN following his brother's resignation in August. Cuomo had said that "I never made calls to the press about my brother's situation."

Cuomo also said that he never "attacked, nor encouraged anyone to attack any woman who came forward" with accusations against his brother. According to email transcripts released this week, Cuomo wrote to aides that "I have a lead" on one of the accusers, although it was not clear what he meant.

Things moved quickly this

week following the release of the transcripts. CNN took him off the air on Tuesday and suspended him indefinitely before the firing on Saturday.

It was clearly a painful decision for Zucker, who installed Cuomo as a morning show host shortly after taking over at CNN in 2013, then later moved him to prime time. Until this week, he had backed Cuomo despite criticism. "Cuomo Prime Time" had been the network's highest-rated show this year, airing at the 9 p.m. Eastern hour between shows by Anderson Cooper and Don Lemon.

The firing leaves a significant hole in the network's schedule. One former rival is becoming a free agent soon: Brian Williams recently announced he was leaving MSNBC, where he had anchored a nightly news hour, when his contract ends with the end of the year.

Baldwin: 'Someone is responsible' for shooting, but 'not me'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Alec Baldwin said he feels incredible sadness and regret over the shooting that killed a cinematographer on a New Mexico film set, but not guilt.

"Someone is responsible for what happened, and I can't say who that is, but it's not me," Baldwin said in an ABC interview with George Stephanopoulos that aired Thursday night, the first time the actor has spoken in depth on screen about the Oct. 21 shooting on the set of the Western "Rust." "Honest to god, if I felt I was responsible, I might have killed myself."

Baldwin said it is essential

for investigators to find out who put the bullet in the gun he fired, that was supposed to be empty, that killed cinematographer Halyna Hutchins and injured director Joel Souza.

"There's only one question to be resolved, and that's where did the live round come from?" Baldwin said.

Baldwin said in a clip from the interview released a day earlier that "I didn't pull the trigger. I would never point a gun at anyone and pull the trigger at them. Never."

He said it was Hutchins herself who asked him to point the gun just off camera and

toward her armpit before it went off.

Baldwin said at Hutchins' direction he pulled the hammer back. "I let go of the hammer and 'bang' the gun goes off," he said.

When Stephanopoulos told Baldwin that many say you should never point a gun directly at someone on a set, he responded, "unless the person is the cinematographer who was directing me where to point the gun for her camera angle."

Baldwin said it was 45 minutes to an hour before he began to understand that a live round had been in the gun, and didn't

know it for sure until he was being interviewed hours later. He thought Hutchins might have been hurt by a blank at close range or had a heart attack.

"The idea that somebody put a live bullet in the gun was not even in reality."

He had one of several tearful moments when he described Hutchins, saying she was "somebody who was loved by everybody and admired by everybody who worked with her."

Baldwin said he was doing the interview to counter public misconceptions about the shooting and to make it clear that "I would go to any lengths

to undo what happened." But Baldwin said "I want to make sure that I don't come across like I'm the victim because we have two victims here."

Investigators have described "some complacency" in how weapons were handled on the "Rust" set. They have said it is too soon to determine whether charges will be filed, amid independent civil lawsuits concerning liability in the fatal shooting.

Baldwin said he met with the film's armorer Hanna Gutierrez Reed for a gun training session before the shoot, and she appeared ca-

pable and responsible.

"I assumed because she was there and she was hired that she was up to the job," he said.

Gutierrez Reed has been the subject of much of the scrutiny in the case. Her attorney has said she did not put the round in the gun, and believes she was the victim of sabotage. Authorities say they've found no evidence of that.

Baldwin, who was also a producer on the film, said there was no indication to him that crew members were unhappy with safety conditions on the set, though some resigned over the issue.

Divorced dad carries torch 10 years later

DEAR ABBY: I am a 45-year-old divorced father of three. Two of them I share with my ex-wife. We were married for 14 years and have been divorced for 10 years now. Our marriage started falling apart when I became addicted to prescription pain medication. I was using for a couple of years, but I'm sober now.

Our divorce was amicable, and I think we still maintain a great friendship. We call each other occasionally and talk about things other than the kids. After our divorce we both dated and moved in with other people. I am currently single; she's still in a relationship. She recently called and asked me for advice because she's not happy in her current relationship.

I have never stopped loving her, but I don't want to take advantage of her present situation. My kids know how I feel and so do my friends, so she probably does, too. Would it be wrong of me to try to rekindle what we once had, even if there's the slightest chance of she and her current partner working through their issues? I'm not sure she feels the same way about me as I do her.

TORN IN WISCONSIN

DEAR TORN: When your ex-wife called to tell you things aren't going well between her and her current partner, she opened the door to you doing what you are contemplating. If they are not married, you have every right to tell her you have never stopped loving her and ask if she might have

similar feelings. If she doesn't, it would be better for you to know that. But if her answer is yes, it would be worth a try.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I always planned on retiring to Florida. Our son, who is married with children, has been diagnosed with a slow-progressing but deadly disease. My husband still wants to move, but now I am not sure. Our son said we should live our life because we worked hard to retire and should go. I don't know if I could be happy that far away from him and his family now. Please advise.

HESITANT GRANDMA IN OHIO

DEAR HESITANT GRANDMA: I am sorry for the pain you are experiencing regarding your son's diagnosis. Your husband wants to make the move, and your son has told you he does not want you to change your plans. If it's financially feasible, it might make sense for you and your husband to rent a place in Florida for a year and, depending upon how well your son is doing, decide later if you want to make it permanent. Perhaps your husband could go ahead without you if you choose to stay behind.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

DEAR ABBY: I have just moved into a room in a shared house. I like the location and my three roommates. In the course of my interview, the screening process to see if I'd be a good fit for the house, I neglected to mention that I have a girlfriend. Naturally,

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



I'd like to have her see the place, meet my roommates and sleep over, but I also don't want to ruffle any feathers or be premature in having company over. When would be an appropriate time to have this discussion with them?

PONDERING IN THE PRESIDIO

DEAR PONDERING: If you want a good relationship with your roommates, NOW would be a good time to raise the subject. If you do, you may be pleasantly surprised to find they have no objection. If they did, they should have mentioned something during your interview.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

LaVine, DeRozan lead Bulls to 111-107 win over Nets



NEW YORK (AP)—The Bulls were down, but not out.

Behind Zach LaVine's 31 points and DeMar DeRozan's 29, 13 in the fourth quarter, Chicago overcame a double-digit deficit in the second half to beat the Brooklyn Nets 111-107 on Saturday night.

"I thought they were the quicker, more responsive team earlier in the game," said coach Billy Donovan. "Coming out of the half we talked about the adjustments we had to make, and they went out there and did it. What DeMar did out there in the third and fourth quarter was amazing."

Nikola Vucevic and Ayo Dosunmu each added 11 points for the Bulls in a match-up of the top teams in the Eastern Conference.

"If you want to be the best, you have to beat the best," DeRozan said.

The Bulls also beat the East-leading Nets on Nov. 8 and have clinched the season series.

"We're just going to keep coming," DeRozan added. "We're learning not to get down on ourselves if we're missing shots. We're learning a very critical part of the game is to stay level-headed and to stay balanced. There's a lot of time in the game for things to turn over. Stay the course. That's what we do."

Kevin Durant led Brooklyn with 28 points and LaMarcus Aldridge had 20. James Harden added 14 points and 14 assists, but shot 5 for 21 from the field.

The Bulls opened the fourth on a 13-4 run and took their biggest lead at 92-86 on DeRozan's short jumper with 7 minutes remaining.

"The greatness that DeMar displays each and every night in those crunch-time situations, to be able to witness



Chicago Bulls guard Lonzo Ball (2) celebrates with Nikola Vucevic (9) and Zach LaVine (8) after making a 3-point shot against the Brooklyn Nets during the second half of an NBA basketball game in New York, Saturday, Dec. 4, 2021.

AP

what he's doing on such a high level, making tough shot after tough shot while also being a leader just shows the type of person he is," Sosunmu said.

Aldridge's layup brought the Nets within 101-100, but they never got closer.

Durant's 3-pointer with 39 seconds left cut it to 107-105, but Lonzo Ball answered with a 3 with 16 seconds remaining to end the threat.

Patty Mills, who scored 12 points, gave Brooklyn its biggest lead at 71-60 with 6:34 left in the third quarter.

Chicago rallied and LaVine's 3-pointer trimmed it to 80-79 before Paul Millsap, who scored a season-high 13 points, hit a buzzer-beater to give the Nets an 82-79 lead after three quarters.

Brooklyn scored the first nine points of the game, all on 3s, and led 34-28 after the first quarter. The Nets were ahead 56-52 at the half.

"We did a lot of good things," coach Steve Nash

said. "Our guys did what we asked them to do. We got 111 shots at the basket. They just didn't go tonight."

Spurs 112, Warriors 107

In San Francisco, Derrick White scored 25 points, Dejounte Murray had 22 points and 12 rebounds, and San Antonio held off a furious rally to beat Golden State.

The Spurs closed the game with an 8-1 run to win their fourth straight.

Stephen Curry scored 27 points and Jordan Poole added 15 for Golden State, which was playing a night after snapping Phoenix's 18-game winning streak in a matchup of the NBA's top teams.

White hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 1:43 left in the game to give the Spurs a 107-106 lead.

Bucks 124, Heat 102

In Milwaukee, Pat Connaughton made seven 3-pointers and scored 23 points, and Milwaukee

kee avenged an embarrassing loss from the second game of the season, beating Miami despite playing without Giannis Antetokounmpo.

Milwaukee led by as many as 31 points in the second half against a depleted Heat team missing Jimmy Butler and Bam Adebayo due to injuries. Antetokounmpo sat out with a right calf injury.

The Heat routed Milwaukee 137-95 in Miami earlier in the season but the Bucks dominated this time behind Khris Middleton, Connaughton and Jrue Holiday.

Connaughton was 7 of 13 on 3s and Middleton had 22 points, nine assists and six rebounds in 30 minutes. Holiday scored all of his 16 points in the first half as Milwaukee sprinted to a 17-point lead at intermission.

Max Strus scored 25 points for Miami, making five 3-pointers. Caleb Martin had 16 points and Tyler Herro scored 15.

Grizzlies 97, Mavericks 90

In Dallas, Desmond Bane scored a career-high 29 points, and Memphis held on to beat Dallas in its first game since setting an NBA record with a 73-point victory.

Tyus Jones had 16 points and seven assists for the Grizzlies, who haven't trailed at all while going 4-0 since star guard and leading scorer Ja Morant was sidelined with a left knee sprain.

The Mavericks dropped to 0-4 this season without young sensation Luka Doncic. They were also missing his European sidekick, Kristaps Porzingis, and lost their fourth consecutive game without their top two scorers going back to last season.

Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 20 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter for the Mavericks, who cut a 15-point deficit to five in the final five minutes but couldn't get closer.

Nuggets 113, Knicks 99

In New York, Nikola Jokic scored 32 points and had 11 rebounds in just 27 minutes, leading Denver over New York.

Denver never trailed in winning for only the third time in 10 games.

Zeke Nnaji added 21 points off the bench for the Nuggets, Will Barton contributed 13 and Jeff Green 11.

The Knicks have lost three straight overall and fell to 5-8 at Madison Square Garden this season.

Julius Randle led the Knicks with 24 points on 9-for-18 shooting. Evan Fournier chipped in 15, R.J. Barrett added 13 and Alec Burks and Derrick Rose each had 11.

Celtics 145, Trail Blazers 117

In Portland, Ore., Jayson Tatum and Dennis Schroder scored 31 points apiece and Boston rode a sizzling start to a victory over Portland.

Enes Freedom grabbed 15 rebounds off the bench for the Celtics, who made 14 of their first 15 shots and built a 21-point, first-half lead.

CJ McCollum scored 24 points for the Trail Blazers.

Kings 104, Clippers 99

In Sacramento, Calif., Terrence Davis scored 23 of his 28 points in the second half and Sacramento beat the Clippers for the second time in four nights.

Davis made all four of his 3-point attempts in the third quarter and finished 6 of 11 from beyond the arc.

Tyrese Haliburton added 18 points, six rebounds and five assists for Sacramento, which beat the Clippers 124-115 on Wednesday in Los Angeles. De'Aaron Fox had 17 points, seven rebounds and five assists, and Marvin Bagley III recorded his first double-double of the season with 12 points and 11 rebounds.

Marcus Morris Sr. led the Clippers with 21 points and nine rebounds. Reggie Jackson added 18 points.

Ball, 3 other Hornets in NBA's health and safety protocols

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Four Charlotte Hornets players, including last year's Rookie of the Year LaMelo Ball, have been placed in the NBA's health and safety protocols on Saturday, an indicator they have tested positive of the coronavirus.

Along with Ball, guard Terry Rozier, center Mason Plumlee and forward Jalen McDaniels will be sidelined for at least 10 days, or until they have recorded two negative tests in a 24-hour period according to league rules.

Barring more positive tests, the Hornets would meet the NBA's minimum required eight players to play their next scheduled game on Sunday night at Atlanta. The team is scheduled to depart for Atlanta on Saturday.

The Hornets (13-11) are currently seventh in the NBA Eastern Conference standings. Charlotte's last game came Wednesday night at Milwaukee.

The Hornets' news comes as the league and the Nation-

al Basketball Players Association has been pushing for players, coaches and staff to get booster shots.

The league has said about 97% of players are vaccinated. It is unclear how many players have received booster shots. The NBA told teams on Friday that those who have not received booster shots by Dec. 17 will be subject to stricter rules; for players, that will mean gameday testing and for staffers, it would mean they cannot continue interacting with players or have the level of access that would allow them to be around the court and travel with the team.

There have now been more than 20 players placed in the league's health and safety protocols since the season started. In most cases, that has meant a positive test was detected and players have been sidelined for at least 10 days—some significantly longer. Philadelphia's Joel Embiid was out for about three weeks.

Heat center Bam Adebayo needs thumb surgery, will miss weeks

MIAMI (AP)—Miami Heat star Bam Adebayo needs surgery to repair a torn ligament in his right thumb and is likely out until at least mid-January.

It's the first major injury of Adebayo's five pro seasons. He is averaging a career-best 18.7 points for Miami this season, along with 10.2 rebounds per game.

Adebayo, an Olympic gold medalist this summer, was injured in Monday's loss to Denver. He underwent tests Tuesday and Wednesday to determine the full scope of the injury, and it was determined that he tore the ulnar collateral ligament.

He shrugged off the injury after Monday's game, insisting it was nothing.

"I'm all right," he said.

Turns out, he was anything but.

"Can't do anything about it," Adebayo said of the surgery. "It was my only option."

The timetable for his return isn't expected to be finalized until after surgery, which is scheduled for Sunday. The initial prognosis from the team calls for him to miss around six weeks.

Such a timeframe would have Adebayo—who already was playing through a bone bruise in his knee—missing somewhere between 20 and 25 games.

"Bam is one of the most dynamic, unique players in the league," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "There's not going to be one solution for that. It's going to take some

unique solutions and some thought and we'll figure it out. There's going to be some things we have to do differently. There's no way that we can make it look the same. He's an absolute hybrid on both ends of the court, one of the most unique players in the entire association."

Adebayo's thumb injury is a huge blow for Miami, which already is dealing with a depleted frontcourt because of Markieff Morris' neck injury. Wednesday's game against Cleveland will be the 12th that Morris misses since he was injured in a dustup with Nikola Jokic in Denver last month, and there remains no timetable for his return.

Dewayne Dedmon is the only other big man on the

Miami roster who has logged considerable minutes at center this season. The Heat have others who can play the spot, including 41-year-old Udonis Haslem and power forward P.J. Tucker, who is only 6-foot-5.

Adebayo was one of three players who started all six games for the U.S. at the Tokyo Olympics, where the Americans won gold. He led the team in rebounds, averaging 5.7 per game, plus averaged 6.3 points on 57% shooting at the Games.

And in their first game after learning Adebayo will be gone for several weeks, the Heat were beaten 111-85 by Cleveland on Wednesday.

"I'm already ready for my six weeks to be over," Adebayo said.

Defense lifts Dallas to 27-17 victory over sinking Saints



NEW ORLEANS

(AP)—Dallas defensive coordinator Dan Quinn had to step in for Mike McCarthy as acting head coach and enjoyed the sideline view as the unit he normally oversees lifted the Cowboys out of their recent swoon with a slew of big plays.

CeeDee Lamb had 122 yards from scrimmage, Tony Pollard ripped off a 58-yard touchdown run and the Dallas defense produced a drive-stalling sack and three interceptions in the fourth quarter of a 27-17 victory over the New Orleans Saints on Thursday night.

The Cowboys (8-4) intercepted Saints quarterback Taysom Hill four times in all—three times in the final 6:32 of the game, including defensive tackle Carlos Watkins' pick-6 on a screen pass that made it 27-10 with 2:52 left.

"I finally got to see his emotion and expressions down on the sidelines," Dallas rookie outside linebacker Micah Parsons said of Quinn, a former Atlanta head coach who normally calls defensive plays from a booth with Dallas. "It was good to see a smile on his face and it was good to see another win on the board."

McCarthy and five assistants didn't make the trip because of positive COVID-19 tests.

"I love doing hard things with a group of people and this was one of those moments," a gratified Quinn said. "We wanted to make sure Mike and all the guys that we missed, that we got their back. Honestly, that was the only thing I was nervous about. I didn't want to let them down."

The Saints (5-7) gave the



Dallas Cowboys wide receiver CeeDee Lamb (88) runs past New Orleans Saints linebacker Pete Werner (20) during the first half of an NFL football game, Thursday, Dec. 2, 2021, in New Orleans. AP

dual-threat Hill his first start this season in hopes he could help New Orleans snap a four-game skid. He was effective in spurts, passing for 264 yards and two touchdowns—and running for 101 yards—while playing through an early injury to the middle finger of his throwing hand.

"He played with a lot of heart, a lot of guts," Saints coach Sean Payton said.

But Hill's turnovers proved too much to overcome as the Saints—winners of the NFC

South the previous four seasons—lost a fifth straight game for the first time since 2005, the season before Payton took over in New Orleans.

"It's very frustrating. It's unfamiliar territory for us," Hill said. "This is my fifth year and I haven't experienced anything like this since I've been a Saint."

Dak Prescott passed for 238 yards and a 1-yard touchdown to Michael Gallup.

Prescott was intercepted by Marshon Lattimore in the

middle of the fourth quarter, but the Cowboys canceled out that turnover when Jourdan Lewis hit Hill's arm as he released the ball and Damontae Kazee intercepted.

That was the first of Dallas' three late interceptions. The Saints' next drive stalled on a pick by Trevon Diggs, his league-leading ninth. And Watkins' interception came on the drive after that.

"When the ball was in the air, our guys went and got it," said Parsons, whose 10th

sack of the season also ended a Saints threat early in the fourth quarter. "We tried our best to contain them. I mean, he was getting outside the pocket and we were finding ways to slow him down and getting the ball back."

Saints receiver Deonte Harris turned a short pass into a late 70-yard TD for the game's final score.

The Saints have started slowly throughout their skid and this game was no exception as they failed to score in

the first quarter for the fifth game in a row.

The Saints' first scoring threat came on their second drive, but Brett Maher's 56-yard field goal attempt drifted wide right.

Dallas broke through on its third possession, highlighted by Prescott's 41-yard pass over the middle to Amari Cooper and a lateral pass to Lamb that went for 33 yards to the New Orleans 1. Prescott then tossed a fade to the right corner, where Gallup made a leaping, twisting catch over cornerback Bradley Roby and narrowly touched both feet in bounds.

The Saints tied it on Lil'Jordan Humphrey's 24-yard TD catch early in the second quarter, but never led.

After Greg Zuerlein's 55-yard field goal put Dallas up 10-7, the Saints threatened late in the second half when they drove to the Dallas 26. But Hill's pass toward the left sideline was tipped by receiver Kenny Stills and intercepted at the 5 by Jayron Kearse, who dove to snag the fluttering ball while dragging his toes on the turf before falling out of bounds.

The game remained close into the third quarter, when Pollard gave Dallas a 20-10 advantage by slipping an arm tackle in the backfield and speeding away from everyone else.

Dallas did not report any injuries during the game.

Hours before the game, the Saints placed defensive end Tanoh Kpassagnon on injured reserve after he'd missed the previous two games with an ankle injury. Juwan Johnson hurt his neck after making a leaping 27-yard catch near the end of the first quarter.

Analysis: Why Rodgers got fined and 3 Bucs got suspended

By BARRY WILNER
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

Aaron Rodgers flaunts the NFL/NFLPA coronavirus protocols and gets a fine that barely shows up in his paycheck.

Antonio Brown and two others do the same and get three-game suspensions.

What gives?

It's complicated, but in some ways it's also pretty simple why the Packers quarterback was fined \$14,650, a sum negotiated between the league and the players' union while developing the COVID-19 protocols. And why Brown, teammate Mike Edwards and former Buccaneers player John Franklin III took a much bigger hit for falsifying vaccination documents.

Rodgers was fined for not wearing a mask in some instances, at a Halloween party

and during press conferences. A joint investigation by the NFL and union revealed that he was wearing a mask at other points and complied with the protocols.

Rodgers did mislead the public and the media, but he informed the club—which told the NFL—and his teammates of his status. Indeed, everyone in his ecosystem was aware he was not vaccinated, and he was testing for COVID-19 daily, and social distancing at the team facility. It was those exceptions when he did not do so that led to the fine.

The Packers were nailed for \$300,000 for their lack of oversight in the Rodgers case. Whether that indicates complicity by the organization is a matter of debate.

Tampa Bay was not fined, though it loses an important defensive back in Edwards

for part of the stretch run, and doesn't have Brown, who has missed the last five games with an ankle injury. He also sat out the Bucs' Week 3 loss to the Los Angeles Rams after testing positive for COVID-19.

The actions of Brown, Edwards and Franklin began during the summer and, according to a person familiar with the case, "were acting like they were vaccinated when they were not." The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the players' specific violations have not been announced.

"The league wanted to make an example of these three," the person said, "and wanted to suspend them six to eight games and they settled on three."

The agreement was the players would take the three-game suspensions for repeat-

ed protocol violations, not appeal, and there would be no public statements about the fake vaccination cards.

Another person with direct knowledge of the case told The Associated Press that all three players now are vaccinated.

"These players put all of their people at risk, and themselves and family members, their teammates and team personnel," the person said, also speaking on condition of anonymity. "They were not wearing masks when they (needed to) and were not tested every day, acting as if they were vaccinated."

All 32 NFL teams were visited during training camp last summer and advised of the updated COVID-19 protocols. As early as July 22 the league made a presentation to the clubs to be on the lookout for fake vaccination cards,

and noted to the teams the potential for that to happen based on media reports of people buying fake cards. The NFL even placed within the slide presentation the logo of the FBI, stressing that acquiring and using a fake vaccination card is a law enforcement issue that could lead to jail time.

And the players' association made sure all of its members were aware that they actually falsified a federal document if they had a bogus vaccination document.

However, the protocols do not outline discipline for such a violation. Thus, the negotiations between the league and union that resulted in the three-game dockings.

There has been speculation that Brown's history of misconduct, which includes an eight-game suspension in 2020 for violating the NFL's per-

sonal conduct policy, resulted in stiffer discipline. Both the league and union have insisted that is not the case.

The Brown/Edwards/Franklin case is the first disciplinary action with suspensions, and was announced through a joint statement by the NFL and NFLPA, reflecting the seriousness both take with the protocols.

Will there be more such scenarios? With about 95% of NFL players vaccinated—and providing valid and verified proof—the numbers say that's not likely. By handing down relatively major penalties for such violations, both the league and union hope a loud message has been sent.

Still, imagine if that message has not been heard or heeded, and one or more star players receive suspensions when playoff time rolls around in six weeks.

Giveback demands in MLB bargaining lead to work stoppages



NEW YORK (AP)—When baseball players agreed a decade ago to restraints on signing bonuses for draft picks, then-union head Michael Weiner said: “If it doesn’t work, we can always try something else.”

Getting a side to give back something it gained previously in collective bargaining can lead to difficult negotiations, which is why Major League Baseball has its first work stoppage in 26 years.

Free agency has been the central issue in baseball collective bargaining for a half-century, joined by the luxury taxes, salary arbitration and cost controls on amateur spending.

Following a rare decline in the average salary, these are some of the areas in which the Major League Baseball Players Association demands change. Major League Baseball has told the union there is no support among the owners for the union’s proposals on free agent and arbitration eligibility.

FREE AGENCY

Agreed to in collective bargaining in 1976 following the decision by arbitrator Peter Seitz, who ruled in the Andy Messersmith/Dave McNally grievance that the reserve clause in the Uniform Player Contract meant a club could renew a player for just one season, not in perpetuity as management had long claimed.

Since the 1976 agreement, free-agent eligibility has been set at six seasons of major league service.

The players’ association, claiming teams deliberately have held back prospects to delay their eventual eligibility by a year (one season of service is 172 days, meaning an extra 15 days in the minors can keep a player under team control for an extra year), proposed that for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 offseasons it become six years of service or five years of service and age 30.5, whichever comes earlier. For the 2025-26 offseason and later, eligibility would become six years of service or five



Major League Baseball commissioner Bud Selig, center, is flanked by Vice President of Labor Relations Rob Manfred, left, and MLB Players Association Executive Director Michael Weiner, during a new conference announcing a five-year collective bargaining agreement on Nov. 22, 2011 in New York. **AP**

years of service and age 29.5, whichever comes earlier.

Players lost a grievance over the timing of the Chicago Cubs’ decision to bring up Kris Bryant in April 2015.

“Fans want to come to the ballpark and see their team competing and playing well,” union head Tony Clark said. “Fans like to see a higher level of integrity in the system, such that the types of manipulations that we’ve seen don’t continue to manifest themselves.”

MLB would keep the exist-

ing provision or change eligibility to age 29.5 rather than six years, which it has been since 1976.

“We already have teams in smaller markets that struggle to compete,” baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said. “Shortening the period of time that they control players makes it even harder for them to compete. It’s also bad for fans in those markets. The most negative reaction we have is when a player leaves via free agency. We don’t see

that, making it earlier, available earlier, we don’t see that as a positive.”

Compensation for losing free agents led to a 50-day midseason strike in 1981 that caused the cancellation of 713 games. The current system requiring draft-pick compensation for free agents who turned down qualifying offers has been in place since 2012. MLB has offered to eliminate compensation.

LUXURY TAX

First agreed to following the 232-day strike in 1994-95, the so-called competitive balance tax was an alternative to MLB’s proposed salary-cap system. The initial system that started in 1997 assessed a tax on 35% of the amount above \$51 million for the five teams with the highest payrolls exceeding the threshold.

Rules were strengthened in the 2002 agreement, with a tax starting at 17.5% on payrolls above \$117 million in 2003. Thresholds and rates have been raised, with this year’s

threshold at \$210 million and rates of 20% for a first time over, 30% for a second in a row and 50% for third or more.

The recently expired agreement also had surtaxes for exceeding the threshold by \$20 million or more and \$40 million or more. A maximum of six clubs have exceeded the threshold in a single season. Players have proposed lifting the threshold to \$245 million and owners to \$214 million.

SALARY ARBITRATION

Began in 1974, when players with two or more seasons of major league service were eligible. In the settlement of a two-day strike in 1985, the sides raised eligibility to three seasons starting in 1987, the first significant giveback by players during bargaining. As part of an agreement that followed a 32-day lockout in 1990, eligibility was restored to the top 17% of players by service time, with at least two years of service but fewer than three. That was raised to 22% in 2013.

DIZON

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the current was so strong. The bike course as always it’s hard on the climb and on the run it’s pretty much torture,” he said.

The Nueva Ecija in the Philippines native said he’s dedicating his surprise win in the tryout to his family, friends, and co-triathletes.

Mister said he’s pretty satisfied with his performance in his very first triathlon.

“The run was very good. At the beginning my legs felt like jelly. The first hill in Paupau I made it up to the top but after that I didn’t know if I could finish. The swim felt good because the current was moving us to the beach. I haven’t had much training for the swim so I was surprised to come out of the water first,” he said.

The son of former CNMI national volleyball player Tyce Mister finished runner-up in the men’s division despite a broken chain at the start of the bike split.

“I’m not sure what happened when I was going up the small hill in the beginning as my bike chain fell off and I

was trying to fix it for 4 minutes then one of the volunteers came and helped me fix it and I got back on. I’m pretty happy and pretty surprised I haven’t been training too much but when I do train I train hard. My dad has also been helping me a lot,” he said.

The Marianas High School student said he’s trying out for both triathlon and beach volleyball in next year’s Mini Games, but conceded that he probably has a better chance getting a spot in the former than the latter.

“I’m trying out for beach volleyball, but my older brother Logan is like really good at volleyball. I need a lot more practice...” he said.

Villafria made up for a last-place finish in the swim split to a podium finish among the men. The 50-year-old veteran runner said he hasn’t really trained much the past couple of years due to the pandemic, but still tried his best in the tryout.

“It was hard but I just tried my best. Haven’t really trained since last year. I just tried to push myself in the bike and run after my slow swim.”

Spaeth dominated the wom-

en division after crossing the finish line in 1:19:59. She was followed by Heather Brook and Kathy Ruszala with times of 1:24:54 and 1:27:45, respectively.

“It was really fun for us. It felt good,” Spaeth said.

The 38-year-old MHS teacher from North Dakota said save for the swim, the tryout went smoothly.

“You can’t even see the rock (finish line marker) most of the time so we were looking at the beach than the rock,” she said about the difficult conditions of the swim split.

“The run felt good and that’s not my strong suite. It felt good and it was a good distance. Really happy it was a 5K. I’m also happy we could still do these events during the pandemic. We’re out there racing and we have a great community doing it,” she added.

Brook seconded Spaeth on her assessment of the swim portion of the triathlon, which saw the organizing Triathlon Association of the CNMI abandon the original two-lap course for a straighter path by moving the starting line further north.

“The waves were OK but

the water was really turbulent as you can’t see much and there’s a lot of debris and branches in the water and sometimes you’d be swimming through it. It was a little unnerving if you can’t see as usually the water is so clear and you can use that to see the bottom and see the other swimmers around,” she said.

The 34-year-old nurse practitioner at the children’s clinic of the Commonwealth Health Center said after that everything was peachy.

“We had spotters on the turn to stop traffic. I was happy it was just a 5K run distance. I think the harder part is when races get cancelled after you’ve been training for them. So I was excited to see that this was still happening.”

The cancelled race Brook was alluding to was this year’s Hell of the Marianas, which was supposed to be held yesterday, Dec. 5.

“It was kind of nice to do this instead because that one was cancelled.”

Ruszala jokingly said she joined the tryout after seeing that only Spaeth and Brook have entered in the women’s

category, making her a shoe-in for third.

“You know why I joined because there was no one on third...[seriously] it was good and it was fun. These ladies (Spaeth and Brook) are always motivating everyone in the triathlon community,” said the 38-years-old 3rd grade teacher at Saipan International School.

Like Spaeth and Brook, Ruszala said she also had some issues with the swim split.

“I’m glad that they changed the course a little bit because the current was already pushing us. The bike course was nice and dry unlike the last race when I crashed so there was a lot of mental struggle for me. It’s just a small group but it’s such a good group too,” she said.

The day’s athletic activity didn’t end with the Mini Games tryouts for Ruszala and Spaeth as the two played back-to-back soccer games on Saturday and Sunday.

Rounding up the participants of last Saturday’s tryouts were former lifeguard Leo Wania (1:29:34), TRAC president Manny Sitchon (1:33:38), and TRAC secretary general Ricky Castro (1:43:37).

a condensed season scheduling January through March 2022,” he wrote.

The proposed sports PSS’ Athletic Programs will resume during the January-March timeframe are co-ed volleyball and co-ed basketball for elementary, girls volleyball, boys volleyball, girls soccer, and co-ed badminton for middle school, and girls and boys basketball, boys soccer, and co-ed badminton and outrigger canoe for high school.

TWO

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They’re very confident that their abilities will come back once they get more repetition and practice,” he said.

Unfortunately, training has been stymied by the inclement weather the past week as the national team hasn’t been back at the Francisco “Tan’Ko” M. Palacios Baseball Field since the day they started skills and on-the-field training.

“We had to pause training because of the rain. We haven’t had any practice this week because of rain but it also helped us because we still need to formulate a plan and our policy with regards to the pandemic. Especially with the corona virus going on we thought it would be a great idea to just have a little break on the training. Today, Monday, they will resume training,” said Santos.

The SBL head also said Star Marianas Air Inc. cancelling inter-island flights to Tinian and Rota will obviously have a negative effect on players from both islands trying out for the national team.

“It’s a concern because it obviously impacts the Tinian and Rota players and we just have to wait how that plays out and we’re going to try and accommodate those guys as best as we can,” he said.

Santos admitted that he’s not entirely sure if the Tinian and Rota players are back on Saipan as SBL allowed them to fly to their home islands to spend Thanksgiving there.

“Last week we did allow them to go home to celebrate Thanksgiving with their families,” he said.

JANUARY

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ball League (6v6) at Marianas High School, High School Girls Basketball (5v5) at MHS Gym, Co-ed Middle School Badminton at MHS Gym, Co-ed Middle/High School Aquathlon at Guma Sakman, and Boys High School Soccer (8v8) at a still to be determined venue.

Gross hoped PSS’ athletic programs would resume fol-

lowing the end of Torres’ original 10-day closure of local schools as early as Nov. 17, but because of the continued rise in local COVID-19 cases, PSS has decided to just resume its inter-scholastic sports competitions early next year.

“Athletic Programs intends to open safely in mid-January 2022 but things are exceptionally fluid as we work through doing our part to support community mitigation efforts. Fingers crossed for the

resumption of sports and other extra-curricular activities. Our community is certainly ready to resume these meaningful components of whole child development,” Gross told *Saipan Tribune*.

In a Dec. 1, 2021 memo sent to public and private schools that are part of PSS’ Athletic Programs, Gross clarified the postponement of sports competition despite the return for face-to-face instruction.

“Due to PSS’ re-opening



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Saipan Tribune Sports



LaVine, DeRozan lead Bulls to 111-107 win over Nets **PAGE 17**

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Dizon, Spaeth top 2nd Mini Games tryout

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Nap Dizon and Robyn Spaeth won the second tryout for the CNMI National Triathlon Team for the 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games last Saturday in Marpi.

The 45-year-old Dizon was the first to complete the 750-meter swim, 20-kilometer bike, and 5-km run in 1:17:32. He was followed by 16-year-old Dylan Mister in 1:18:21 with Ronald Villafria coming in third in 1:19:18.

Dizon said he's just overjoyed to continue doing outdoor activities despite the COVID-19 pandemic.



"COVID season you need to be careful and stay healthy! I wasn't expecting to win at all. I just wanted a workout this weekend," he said.

The Transamerica Hardware staff said like all triathlons he participated in so far, it was a struggle toward the finish line.

"The swim was horrible as
See DIZON on Page 19



Spaeth



Dizon



Grace Christian Academy Lady Eagles against Hopwood Lady Hilltais in action in this file photo from the recent IT&E Interscholastic Girls Middle School Basketball League at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Inter-scholastic sports pushed back to January

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The CNMI Public School System's athletic programs have been postponed until mid-January following the recent community spread of COVID-19 on Saipan.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres issued a directive closing schools in late October after three CO-

VID-19 cases were detected at two PSS campuses. As a result, PSS athletic program director Nick Gross immediately put on hold interscholastic competitions island-wide.

Affected competitions were the Co-ed Elementary Grass Volleyball (6v6) at the Oleai Sports track inner field, the Middle School Girls Volley-

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Two Rota players trying out for Mini Games

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Saipan Baseball League announced that two players from Rota have recently joined the tryouts for the CNMI National Baseball Team for next year's Pacific Mini Games.

SBL president Jay Santos said national coaches Deron Flores and Gary Cruz flew down to the CNMI's southernmost island two weeks ago and conducted a tryout.

"Out of 10 players I believe that tried out there we

now have two Rota players that are here and their names are Luis Hocog and Daniel Rangamar," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

The Triple J executive said Hocog and Rangamar joining the tryouts for the national baseball team for the Mini Games is a testament to SBL's all-inclusive nature when it comes to picking players that will represent the CNMI in the quadrennial event.

"It's the same process we



did as on Tinian. All the players that tried out on Rota had to meet a certain criteria that was laid out by the coaches and the coaches found two players that met that criteria. Those two players from Rota and those four from Tinian have the same opportunity to make the national team like all the players on Saipan," he said.

Santos also happily shared that the national team, headed by manager Manny Sablan, began skills and on-the-field

training sessions last Nov. 27. He added there's still 50-60 players trying out for the national team and those include the four players from Tinian and the two from Rota.

"Last Saturday was the first time the coaches worked with the pitchers. They segregated the pitchers from the infielders and the outfielders. They obviously showed some rust but we've got really talented players here in the NMI and the best part is they exude confidence as well.

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Players trying out for the CNMI National Baseball Team for next year's Pacific Mini Games do some sprint sessions with strength and conditioning coach Joey Tudela (with timer) at the Oleai track and field.

MARK RABAGO